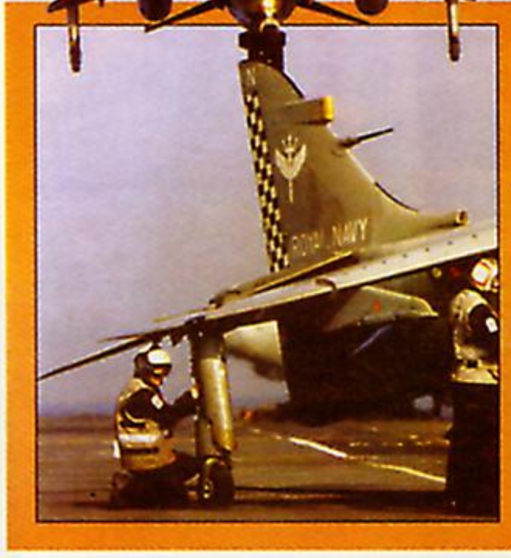
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Naval Harriers fly for Glory: page 15



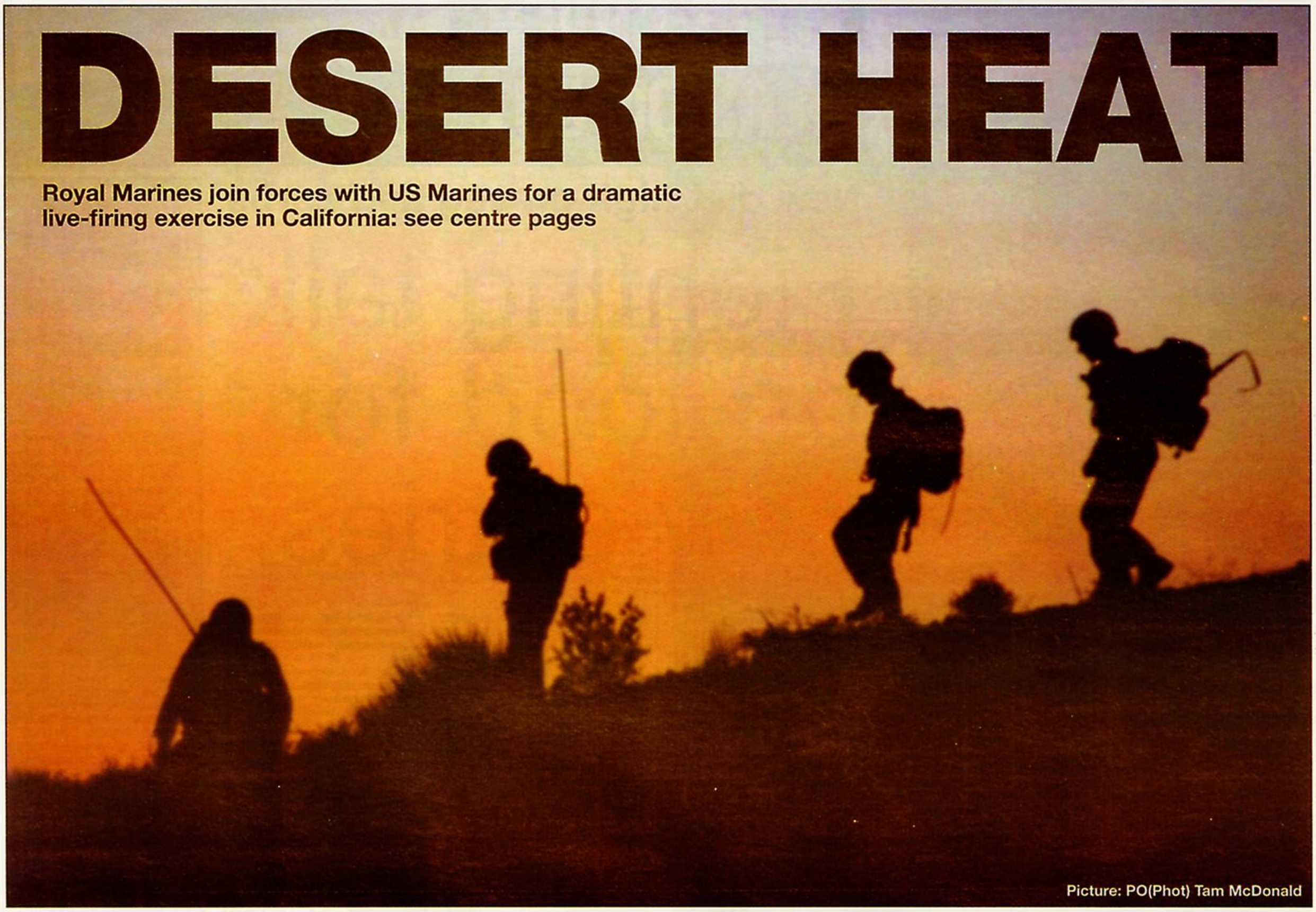
Grand entrance on page 4



Sky high: page 30

DESERT HEAT

Royal Marines join forces with US Marines for a dramatic live-firing exercise in California: see centre pages



Picture: PO(Phot) Tam McDonald

Royal Marines support Black Watch in Iraq

ROYAL Marines are supporting efforts by the Black Watch to stabilise Iraq as part of a four-pronged deployment by 40 Commando.

The Somerset-based green berets are operating in four distinct parts of the country, continuing escort, patrol and support tasks.

The most high-profile recent British deployment in Iraq has been the commitment of the Black Watch to Camp Dogwood, codenamed Operation Bracken.

Less well-known is the attachment of Royal Marines to the Army regiment; a troop from Alpha Company is operating as dismounted troops, alongside a mortar troop.

"The guys on Bracken really feel as if they are doing something worthwhile," said 40 Cdo's Capt Steve Melbourne.

"But it's more than just Bracken. We are all aware that we're doing a good job here. What you don't see in reports at home are things like reliable power supplies in Basra. These little things make a great deal of difference.

"Basra is really on the up at the moment. Of course, you need to be aware – there are daily incidents. But across the city, things are coming along well."

A company of Royals is operating in Baghdad, but the bulk of 40 Cdo is deployed at Shaibah camp near Basra and at Az Zubayr, to the south of the city.

One of the most encouraging sights for the Royal Marines has been watching Iraqi troops passing out of training. "The feedback we get is that the locals are happy that we are here, in the background," Capt Melbourne added.

"For us, operations are getting slightly easier – the weather is becoming less of an issue. We're down to the low 30s which is really quite pleasant."

The Commando will be deployed in Iraq until mid-January which naturally means Christmas away from home.

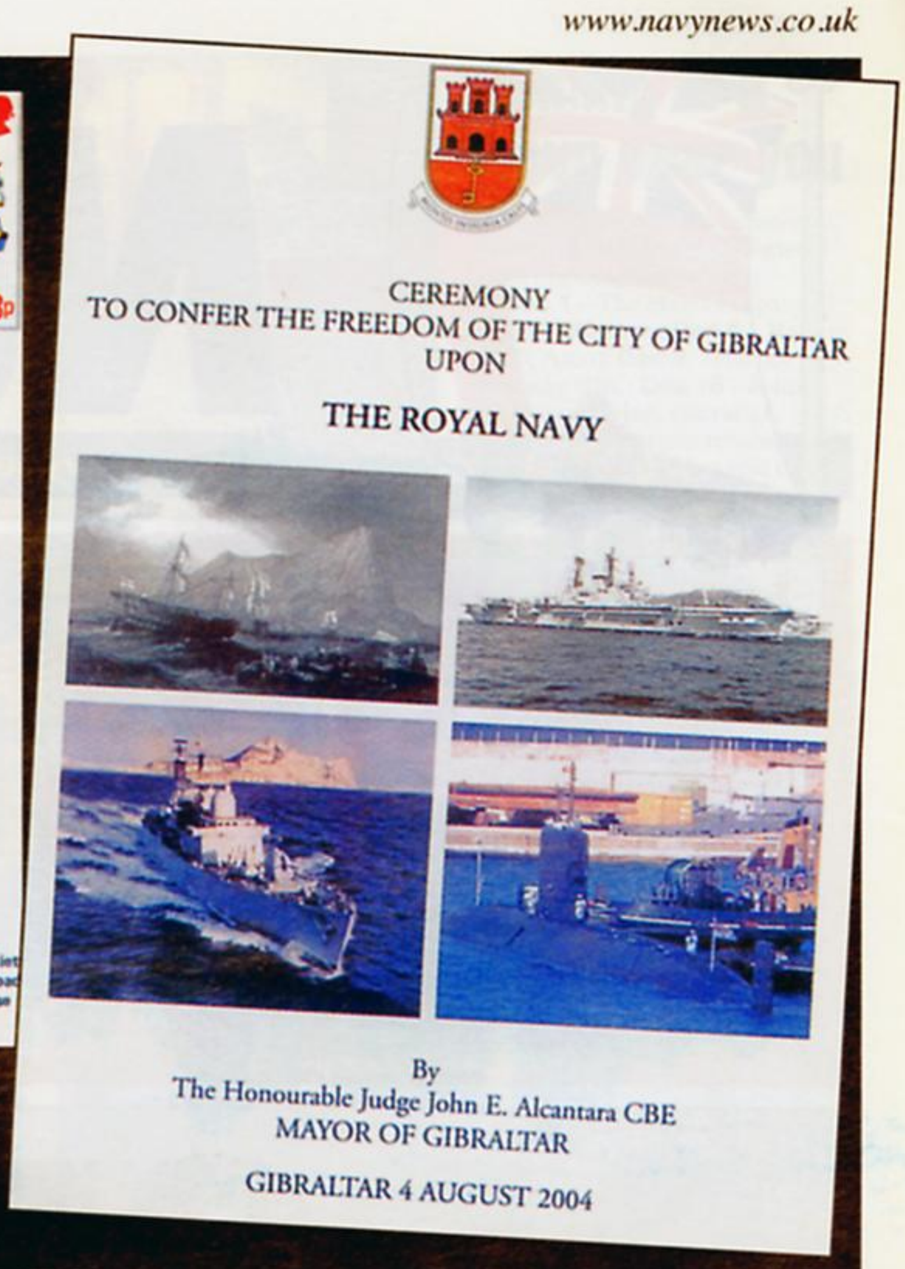
"It's going to be a disjointed Christmas – our guys are spread to the four winds, but that's one of those things which happens," said Capt Melbourne. "We will make the best of it, but we are looking forward to getting back to our families next month."

■ *Navy News* reader offer: £2 off entry for London Boat Show, see page 36





Royal Naval Philatelic Society
19 College Road
HM Naval Base
Portsmouth



CEREMONY
TO CONFER THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF GIBRALTAR
UPON

THE ROYAL NAVY

By
The Honourable Judge John E. Alcantara CBE
MAYOR OF GIBRALTAR

GIBRALTAR 4 AUGUST 2004

ROCK COVER VERSION OUT

LATEST cover produced by the RN Philatelic Society marks the tercentenary of British Gibraltar and the ceremony to confer the Freedom of the Rock upon the Royal Navy. Each one comes with a copy of the souvenir programme. Tel 01730 231668 for details.

FIGUREHEADS



LOST: CHARYBDIS

CHARYBDIS was a monster in Greek mythology that dwelt on one side of the Straits of Messina. Here she created a whirlpool in order to suck unwary mariners to their doom.

On the cliff below which Charybdis lived was a wild fig tree which saved Odysseus when he was swept back through the Straits after being wrecked on the island of Helios and it is from this that the badge of Charybdis is derived.

Early black and white photographs of the figurehead show a strong, somewhat masculine female with a very thick neck and long flowing hair, dressed in the classical style with arms outstretched.

She was made by the well known ship carver Alexander Pettig for the third vessel of the name. This was a Pearl-Class wooden steam corvette of 2,187 tons with screw propulsion mounting 20 8in guns. With an original building price of £43,000, she was launched at Chatham on June 1, 1859 and sent to the Far East station where she took part in operations off the Malay penisula.

In June 1869 she started a voyage around the world, first to South America, then on to New Zealand and Japan, arriving back at Plymouth in November 1870.

In 1877 she found herself in Hong Kong and was recommissioned for the China Station. Returning to the UK in 1879, she was given on loan for two years to the Canadian Government for use as a training ship, helping to form the Dominion's fledgling naval service.

She was sold in Halifax, Nova Scotia and returned to the UK to be broken up in 1884.

The figurehead was removed and given back to the Admiralty and was first mounted at Sheerness Dockyard. Later it was transferred to Scotland and first found a new home at HMS Bruce, the RNR air station at Crail. When this establishment closed down, Vice Admiral Sir Angus Cunningham Graham, then Flag Officer Scotland and Admiral Superintendent Rosyth Dockyard, arranged for it to be moved there and placed beneath the flagstaff.

It stayed at this location for many years, slowly deteriorating. First both the outstreched arms were lost, the stumps being painted over, and finally it was deemed to be beyond repair and the order was given that it be scrapped.

New diet high on veg and carbs

Fighting talk on food for new entries

DOCTOR Atkins wouldn't be impressed.

But then the new diet advice for sailors and Royal Marines isn't about shedding pounds, it's about providing energy.

New entry trainees will all receive nutritional advice as senior officers and food experts make sure the sailors and green berets of the future tuck into a balanced diet which gives them the strength to get through training.

And the advice given goes against the central tenet of the 'in' diet by Dr Atkins: make sure you eat lots of carbohydrates.

Nutritionist Dr Anna Casey with defence research group QinetiQ, who helped devise the guidelines for recruits, says the military has very different food needs from civvy street.

"Something like the Atkins diet may be very popular in the civilian world, but it's totally unsuited to the military," she explained.

"Our aim is to improve performance in training – to reduce attrition through injury and illness. The idea is that they take what they learn in training with them through their careers.

"From our studies, recruits do not get enough energy from their food at present – there are too many fats, crisps, burgers, chips. These are okay – but in moderation."

Much of the advice is similar to that given by the Government to the rest of society – such as don't drink too much alcohol, watch salt and sugar intake.

But recruits need 3,600 calories each day – the average civilian needs just 2,000-2,500 calories – and 60 per cent of food should be carbohydrates as a result.

The advice is already being heeded by the trainee chefs passing through HMS Raleigh. "We are watching what we eat more – and we are also learning that presentation is important," said CH Matt Downing.

"If you put the vegetables and carbohydrates out first and the meat later, then people will go for more veg and carbs. It's simple things like that that make a difference."

CH Adam Butterworth added: "You have to provide something which people are going to enjoy, but you have to provide a physically balanced diet. If you're going to be active, you're going to need a lot of carbohydrates."

Besides a booklet aimed at recruits, a more comprehensive pamphlet has been produced for commanding officers so that they can make sure their men and women are eating the right things.

"We teach people to march, to shoot, to fight, but until now we have not taught them about diet and nutrition," said Brig Jeff Little, head of Defence Catering.

"Diet is an obsession in civvy street. This is one of our first steps to improving nutrition in the forces."

General advice to recruits:

- Eat sparingly: chips, cakes, crisps, burgers, sweets, pies and pastries
- Eat in moderation: red and white meat, fish, eggs, nuts
- Eat regularly: cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, potatoes, fruit and vegetables
- Drink: eight to ten glasses of water daily



● *DEATH BY CHOCOLATE: a pirate ship confection spoils the message 'eat less sweets' at the Combined Services Culinary Challenge. See p18*

Pension scheme changes outlined in Cyprus

SAILORS and fellow Service personnel on Cyprus have been briefed on the shake-up of Forces pensions – a briefing their colleagues around the world should all have received by next summer.

Changes to the existing pension scheme are likely to be introduced from April 2006 and all personnel will be expected to say whether they wish to stay with the existing scheme, or swap to the new pension.

The decision, once made, is irreversible so lectures are being held and pamphlets distributed to allow personnel to take the decision which suits them best.

"There is no 'one size fits all' for either scheme and when it comes to making the decision, it is imperative that personnel factor in all circumstances – financial, divorce, children, everything," said Maj Gen James Gordon, general secretary of the Armed Forces Pension Society.

Among the most significant changes to the pension system will revolve around the amount of time served in uniform.

Under the current scheme, sailors and marines joining up at 16 are not credited with their first two years of service when the pension is calculated. That is being redressed in the new-look pension, which new entrants to HM Forces will automatically be signed up to.



LIGHT FANTASTIC

ONE of the most spectacular firework displays in Portsmouth on bonfire night was staged by the Royal Navy at HMS Excellent, Whale Island, home of the new Fleet Headquarters – and photographed by CPO(A) George Tweedie

Cash back to front line plan by Hoon

DEFENCE Secretary Geoff Hoon promised more cash would reach the front line of the three Forces as he unveiled wide-ranging plans to make the MOD more efficient.

Mr Hoon told fellow MPs he was committed to saving £2.8 billion by 2007/2008, pumping the money back into the military.

The MOD was recently criticised by a committee of MPs for shortcomings during last year's campaign in Iraq when, despite many improvements since the first Gulf conflict, many units still lacked vital kit.

Mr Hoon said a range of initiatives and measures – including cutting staff, modernisation especially of the logistics/supply chane and changes under the 2004 review of the Armed Forces – would benefit front-line units.

Among efficiency drives in the RN are the merging of the responsibilities of Fleet Headquarters and the Second Sea Lord's organisation. The new Fleet HQ on Whale Island in Portsmouth will save £10 million per year.

"These plans for efficiency are about maximising the resources for the front line. The front line needs support, but we need to ensure that that support is as lean as possible," Mr Hoon told Parliament.

❑ Costing too much – see p36

First overhaul for new century frigate

'MILLENNIUM frigate' HMS Kent has been the subject of a fierce bidding war – but don't worry, she's not been sold off.

The Portsmouth-based Type 23 warship, commissioned in 2001, needs her first period in dock next year after a busy spell under the White Ensign, which has included two Gulf deployments (one of them a record-breaking tour of duty seizing more smuggled oil than any other RN vessel in the region).

Babcock Rosyth won the contract to overhaul Kent in a 'reverse auction' run by the Defence Logistics Organisation – looking for the lowest, rather than the highest bidder in a highly competitive three-and-a-half-hour auction.

The £4m-£5m revamp – the exact cost is confidential – will see Kent given a general overhaul, including repainting, and fitted to carry the Merlin anti-submarine helicopter, joining a growing number of Type 23s which are Merlin-capable.

The overhaul will run from next month until the summer when Kent will rejoin the Fleet.

Wargraves project takes off

IN ITS first 16 months the British War Memorial Project website has had over 43,000 visitors.

The project existed to create an online photo-archive of the graves of British servicemen and women from 1914 to the present day, said publicity co-ordinator Paul Hamilton. On the UK mainland alone there are over 320,000 personnel commemorated on memorials and graves. Thanks to the help of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and sister projects in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the project was making "excellent progress".

Anyone can access the site free of charge and search by surname for a picture of a war grave.

For more information visit www.wargraves.org.uk or email steve@wargraves.org.uk or write to British War Memorial Project HQ, 11 Falcon Road, Horndean, Hants PO8 9BY

Chicoutimi death deeply felt



SAILORS and aircrew who led efforts to help the stricken Canadian submarine Chicoutimi joined their Commonwealth comrades and the local community in a memorial service near Faslane.

More than 500 people descended on Rhu Church, a short distance from HM Naval Base Clyde, which was the hub of rescue efforts during the five-day mission to bring the diesel boat safely back to port.

Nine crew were injured when fire broke out aboard the submarine, the former HMS Upholder, as she carried out trials 260 miles west of Faslane in atrocious weather conditions.

The resulting rescue operation, codenamed Operation Causeway, involved three frigates, two RFAs, three tugs, two RAF Nimrods, three fishing boats, a dozen helicopters and the efforts of 13 shore bases and organisations, with Devonport-based Type 23 frigate HMS Montrose in charge of the rescue mission at the 'business end'.

Canadian officer Lt Chris Saunders was airlifted off Chicoutimi by a Sea King from 771 NAS at Gannet, but later died in hospital in Ireland.

Cdr Andrew Webb, Montrose's Commanding Officer, said it was only now that the selfless actions of the team involved in the rescue mission had sunk in.

"Throughout the operation there were many individual acts of bravery, but one aspect stands out from the five-day rescue more than any other and that was teamwork," he added.

"Several hundred personnel were involved from the chefs on board Montrose to the huge shore-side support effort in the background. The crew were magnificent throughout, professional, resolute and incredibly brave.

"The death of Lt Saunders was felt deeply by all my crew. Every effort was made to save his life and our sympathy, thoughts and prayers are with his family."



CHEESEDARING

DID someone order some Edam? The first of the Fleet's next generation destroyers HMS Daring continues to grow as workers at BAE Systems' Scotstoun yard on the Clyde piece together another slice of the warship jigsaw.

This 265-ton block, 30ft tall and 70ft wide, was built at the company's Govan yard and ferried down the Clyde by barge.

The Type 45 destroyer is being built in segments by BAE and the VT Group in Portsmouth (the latter is building the bow section and main mast).

The segment on the move here forms one of the lower mid sections of Daring, which is due to be launched towards the end of 2005.

Jetty crane falls on carrier

FIVE people were treated in hospital after a crane toppled on to the flight deck of aircraft carrier HMS Invincible in Portsmouth.

The large crane, which operates on rails on Sheer Jetty, fell while attempting to lift a mobile crane from the carrier's flight deck. The jetty crane is owned by the MOD but maintained and operated by FSL.

The driver, who suffered head injuries and concussion, was trapped for more than an hour, and was released by the FSL specialist rescue team, who were working with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The driver, another civilian contract worker and three Naval personnel were treated at Queen Alexandra Hospital, though all except the driver were discharged the same day.

A further 12 people were treated in the carrier's sick bay for minor abrasions and shock.

A catwalk and sponson were damaged, and there was slight damage to the flight deck, which was being repainted, but it is expected that repairs will be completed before the ship sails in the New Year.

The incident resulted in some restrictions to ferry movements in the vicinity of the carrier, to prevent wash causing the ship to move during the rescue.

An investigation into the incident is being conducted by the Health and Safety Executive, in conjunction with the MOD.

Final duty for frigate

FRIGATE HMS Marlborough has left Portsmouth to begin her final tour of duty under the White Ensign.

The Type 23 frigate is spending six months in the Arabian Gulf as the RN's presence in the region, working alongside coalition forces in surveying traffic on the seas, clamping down on smugglers and generally providing a reassuring presence.

She will also make goodwill visits to Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

"The deployment has been the focus of preparations on board for the past nine months," said Commanding Officer Cdr Ian Graham. "With a challenging period of training successfully completed, the ship is ready to make a full contribution to the Royal Navy's activities in the region."

Marlborough is due home in April and will decommission two months later after 14 years' service.

Poppies in the snow

SILENCE fell on a forest clearing in the Sierra Nevada as members of 45 Commando RM, on exercise in the United States, remembered their fallen comrades.

Their tribute of 600 poppies on a cairn of snow was just one variation of the Senior Service paying tribute to the war dead – see page 16 for more.



Albion proves to be keen as Mustardia



● *HMS Albion leads the Mustardian forces during the latest Joint Maritime Course off the north-west coast of Scotland*

Picture: LA(PHOT) Brad Bradbury

AMPHIBIOUS flagship HMS Albion headed a NATO task force in the latest Joint Maritime Course off the coast of Scotland.

The Devonport-based assault ship, which achieved operational status this summer, led Mustardian Naval forces as a fictitious scenario was played out by Allied units.

Albion headed a task group of helicopter carrier HMS Ocean and three US destroyers, all under the overall command of Commander Amphibious Task Group (COMATG) Cdre Chris Parry.

"The Mustardia part was imaginary, but the embarkation of the commander of the US Second Destroyer Squadron, more than 100 Norwegian commandos and six of their combat boats was most certainly for real," said Albion's logistics officer Cdr Jim Lines.

Powerful radar in US warships Arleigh Burke, Porter and Anzio, and the insertion of Norwegian commandos, allowed flagship staff to build a comprehensive picture of the enemy and direct the battle.

"It's been a fascinating period in which to work closely with our US and Norwegian allies, and experiment with the latest marine technology," said Albion CO Capt Keith Winstanley.

"These are just the sort of training opportunities we need to ensure success in future coalition operations."

Road sense

DEVONPORT Naval Base hosted the MOD's local support event for National Road Safety Week last month.

Vehicle health checks and drop-in eyesight checks were among the facilities on offer, as well as displays and advice.

DC takes reins from LC

PATROL ship HMS Dumbarton Castle is on station in the Falklands after an 8,000-mile journey south to relieve sister ship Leeds Castle.

The handover took place at sea around 1,200 miles north of the Falklands, and represents the start of a three-year commitment by Dumbarton Castle.

On leaving Portsmouth the patrol ship had some last-minute work-ups to complete off Devonport – including the landing of a Sea King on her flight deck, always an impressive sight on a relatively small ship.

Then it was a four-week voyage to the South Atlantic, with a traditional visit from Neptune's Court as the ship crossed the line.

Sailors also swam from northern to southern hemisphere as a Hands to Bathe was piped on the Equator.

During the trip the ship called in at Tenerife and Rio – the former a quiet three-day break, the latter an active five-day sightseeing experience.

The handover and steam-past between the Castles took place while 'DC' sailed to Mare Harbour and 'LC' headed to Rio and then home.

"The handover was a particularly poignant moment for me personally having been Commanding Officer of both ships in the past two years," said Dumbarton's CO, Lt Cdr John Garratt.

"I have great affection for the Castle class – they are fantastic, seaworthy and manoeuvrable ships which have a very special place in my heart."

■ **Leeds Castle comes home – page 19**

Exeter and Grey Rover back from Far East

TYPE 42 destroyer HMS Exeter and her dedicated tanker RFA Grey Rover have returned to the UK after a high-profile deployment to the Far East.

The ships spent eight months away, undertaking defence diplomacy visits to ten countries, including China, Japan, Vietnam, Russia and Thailand.

One of the main objectives of the deployment was a two-week exercise in the South China Sea involving more than 30 ships from the countries which make up the Five Powers Defence Arrangement – the UK, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand.

Exercise Bersama Lima tested all aspects of maritime warfare and a joint approach to air defence, and HMS Exeter commanded a 20-strong task group.

A similar exercise, Bersama Shield, was staged in May as the ships headed east.

Defence Industry Days, promoting British equipment manufacturers, were held on board in Brunei and Bangkok.

The ship and her ship's company of 266 often found themselves in the headlines, including the match between Exeter's football team and the South Korean Navy side which was staged in the splendid World Cup stadium in Inchon to celebrate 120 years of football in the country – the game was introduced by British sailors.

Sailors from HMS Exeter also carried out charity work in many ports of call, including painting and decorating orphanages in India, the Philippines and on the island of Penang.

Fund-raising activities in Vietnam enabled six children to have reconstructive surgery to correct cleft palates.

Cdr Andrew Reed, the destroyer's Commanding Officer, said the deployment had been busy, varied and successful: "We have demonstrated the UK's continuing commitment to the Far East region, supported the Five Powers Defence Arrangement with two major exercises and undertaken a high level of defence diplomacy.

"We also contributed to the UK's wider security interests in the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific regions."

Both ships called in at Gibraltar on the way home.

Ajax plea

THIS month marks the 65th anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate, and the HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association is hoping to swell its numbers as it remembers those who died in the cruiser on December 13, 1939.

Anyone who served in the later Leander-class frigate HMS Ajax would be welcomed – they should contact Jack Quaintance at 10 George Street, Harwich, CO12 3ND.

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Maltese cross-training is an eye-opener

MALTESE aviators had an eye-opening insight into shipboard flight operations when HMS Kent called in.

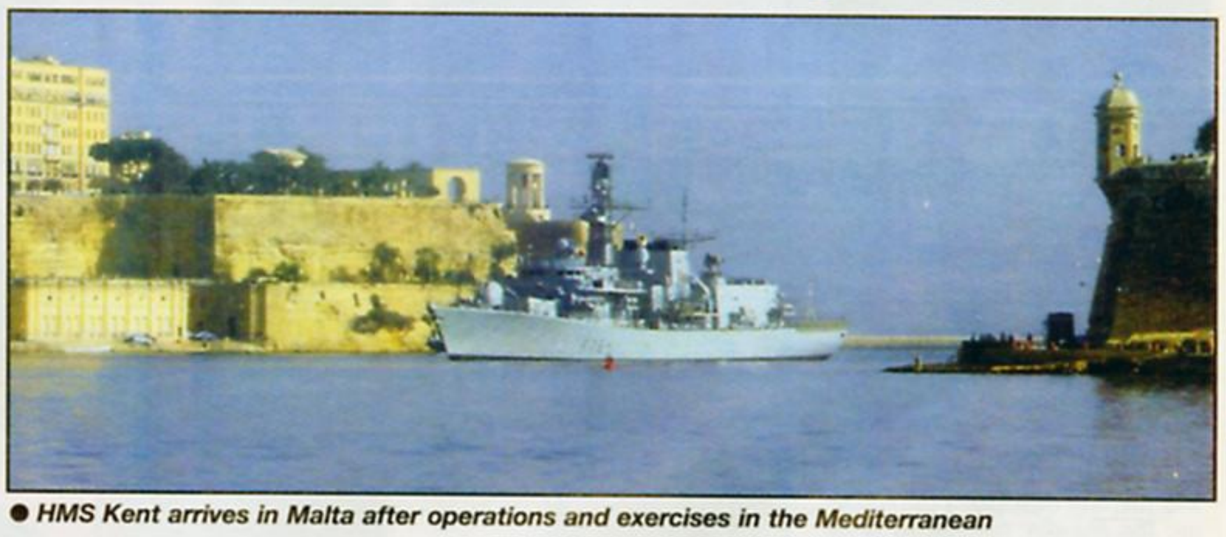
Aircrew from the Type 23 frigate exchanged places with counterparts from the Maltese Air Squadron during a visit to the Mediterranean island.

Kent sailed from the UK in August to join NATO's permanent Mediterranean task force SNFM and join HMS Invincible on Exercise Destined Glory.

With duties alongside the carrier over, the frigate visited Malta to foster ties with the island's armed forces, totalling just 1,600 men and women.

Co-operation in the air was the crux of the visit, and Kent's Lynx helicopter, Flight 425, flew to the island's Luqa airfield to work with Maltese fliers who crew the Alouette 3, the aircraft used for the majority of search-and-rescue operations.

The Maltese crew clambered aboard the Lynx for a zip around the island, but the real experience for the fliers came when the Maltese winch crew changed places with second observer Lt Matt Boulind and winchman AEM 'Taff' Parsons for a SAR exercise involving a 20ft Maltese patrol boat, while the two RN crew climbed into the Alouette.



● *HMS Kent arrives in Malta after operations and exercises in the Mediterranean*

Malta's senior flier, Maj Claudio Spiteri, meanwhile toured Kent and asked about operating helicopters at sea – the island will get its first patrol ship capable of aviation operations next year.

Although the flight deck of a Type 23 is the largest in the RN's destroyer/frigate fleet, it looked little larger than a postage stamp to the major.

"The ship carried out a deck landing with Maj Spiteri sat, wide-eyed, in the Lynx," said weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Steve Corps. "A picture paints a thousand words, and the dangers involved were not lost on the Maltese pilot with over 6,000 hours' experience, but not one deck landing.

"The few days with the Maltese Armed Forces were both valuable and enlightening – the experience of their SAR squadrons in the Mediterranean is unrivalled and of great benefit to anyone visiting this theatre."

Ships of the Royal Navy No589

Wave Ruler is more than just a tanker

ROYAL Fleet Auxiliary vessel Wave Ruler is officially designated a Large Fleet Tanker – but that is only the start for a ship which has seen plenty of action in recent months.

Wave Ruler has been Atlantic Patrol Tanker (North) since April, operating in the Caribbean region in support of Royal Navy warships and those of allied navies.

The 31,500-ton tanker conducted replenishments at sea (RASes) with the French, Netherlands and US navies, and with the US Coast Guard.

She also conducted an historic first RAS for a Mexican Navy – specifically the frigate ARM Victoria.

The RAS required Wave Ruler to visit the port of Cozumel, in Mexico, where sailors from the Victoria underwent seamanship training on the RAS rig, tactical communications, ship handling and the command and control aspects of the operation – all under the guidance of RFA personnel.

A few days later both ships were at sea to carry out the successful RAS, winning praise from the captain of the Victoria.

Beyond refuelling – and Wave Ruler can carry up to 16,000m³ of liquids, including 3,000m³ of aviation fuel – the tanker has fulfilled a number of other roles.

Her large flight deck makes her an ideal platform for counter-drugs operations, and she has spent plenty of time operating independently of other warships.

She has her own Lynx flight embarked, and a small team of US Coast Guard officers who carry out the boardings of suspect vessels also count the British auxiliary as home.

To help in this role, Wave Ruler can also operate US Coast Guard helicopters.

She is also a welcome asset in disaster-relief operations – as was proved earlier this year when she and Type 23 frigate HMS Richmond tracked the vicious Hurricane Ivan across the region, clearing up in its wake.

Wave Ruler carries a variety of stores for many eventualities, and her aircraft and boat capabilities are useful assets.

She was on hand when Ivan smashed into Grenada and Grand Cayman; in both islands personnel from the auxiliary made up shore parties which provided technical assistance and medical aid ashore – vital 'first aid' to get power and communications systems restored to working order.

In Grenada, in particular, personnel from Wave Ruler worked long hours at the hospital, helping the overstretched staff there who were treating hundreds of casualties of the storm.

And at Grand Cayman it was Wave Ruler's boat crews who provided a valuable service, transporting stores and personnel ashore from the two British ships through choppy seas.

Wave Ruler will remain in the Caribbean until February, when she is due to be relieved by her sister Wave Knight.

She will then return to the UK to take a starring role in the celebrations which will mark the centenary of the RFA, including participation in the International Fleet Review, and she will undertake a tour of British ports in July and August.

Wave Ruler, which was launched on the Clyde in February 2001, is the second auxiliary to bear the name.

The first was a tanker originally launched in January 1946 at the Furness Shipbuilding yard on Teeside for the Ministry of Transport as the Empire Evesham.

She and her Empire sisters soon took on the Wave prefixes, and Wave Ruler remained a replenishment tanker, though many of her sisters were used as freighters.

The first Wave Ruler had a full displacement of 16,650 tons, a length of 425ft and a speed of 15 knots.

She took part in the atomic tests at Christmas Island, and in the early 1950s ran aground off Wales.

She became an oil depot ship in 1971, and was sold in December 1975, having never had the chance to win a Battle Honour – an opportunity which has not yet presented itself to the current ship either.



● *RFA Wave Ruler prepares to conduct a replenishment at sea with HMS Monmouth in the Caribbean* *Picture: LA(PHOT) Jack Russell*

Facts and figures

Class: Wave-class Large Fleet Tanker
Pennant number: A390
Builder: BAE Systems, Govan
Launched: February 9, 2001
Commissioned: April 27, 2003
Length: 181.7 metres
Beam: 26.9 metres
Draught: 10 metres
Displacement: 31,500 tons fully loaded
Machinery: Diesel-electric; four Wartsila 12V 32E/GCLM diesel generators; two GECLM motors; one shaft; Kamewa bow and stern thrusters
Speed: 18 knots
Weapons: two 30mm cannon; four 7.62mm machine guns; fitted for but not with two Vulcan Phalanx
Aircraft: One spot for a Sea King, Merlin or Lynx
Radar: Surface search: E/F band; navigation: KH 1007, I-band; IFF: Type 1017
Complement: 80 plus 22 aircrew

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No 8

Capt Robert Sherbrooke VC

THIS month's hero not only played a crucial role in saving a convoy – despite hideous injuries when his ship was struck by a shell – but he also had a significant effect on German naval policy in World War II.

Capt Robert St Vincent Sherbrooke – known to his family as Rupert – led the 17th Destroyer Flotilla when it joined Convoy JW51B to Russia.

Sherbrooke, in HMS Onslow, had the task of escorting the 14 merchant ships from the UK and USA to Murmansk, and took up station on the afternoon of Christmas Day 1942 in the North Atlantic.

Alongside the Onslow were Obdurate, Obedient, Orwell and the older Achates, while Force R – cruisers Sheffield and Jamaica – provided cover.



● *Robert Sherbrooke*

Further off, ready to pitch in, were battleship Anson, cruiser Cumberland and two more destroyers.

Convoy JW51B was forced south by a gale and sighted by a U-boat on December 30, prompting Admiral Kummetz, in heavy cruiser Hipper, to sail from Altenfjord with pocket battleship Lutzow and six destroyers.

Hipper and three escorts spotted Obdurate, on the fringe of the convoy, shortly after 9am on December 31 and opened fire, but the convoy was ready.

Sherbrooke had anticipated a surface attack, as the weather and sea conditions were against air and U-boat operations; his destroyers counter-attacked with torpedoes while the freighters turned away under a smokescreen.

The British squadron had already fended off the Germans three times in an hour when another attack was made, but this time a shell from Hipper hit Onslow's funnel, sending splinters through the bridge.

Sherbrooke caught a splinter in the face, smashing his cheek and nose and leaving one eyeball dangling down his cheek.

But he carried on directing the action, giving no sign that he was injured despite being partially blinded and in great pain.

The ship was struck again, holing her and putting some of her guns out of action, but Sherbrooke continued to protect the convoy until his medical officer insisted he go below for treatment.

Command of the flotilla now passed to Lt Cdr Kinloch, who led the remaining destroyers in one more foray against the Germans, and although Hipper hit Achates, killing her captain and causing fatal damage to the old destroyer, the German force again sheared off fearing a torpedo attack.

By midday Hipper had fled, having come under fire from Sheffield and Jamaica, which sank a German destroyer. Lutzow and her escort, which had been lurking to the south to spring a trap, never engaged the Allied ships, which escaped unscathed.

Back in Germany the convoy's escape was regarded as a major embarrassment, and Hitler himself lost faith in the capability of his capital ships, while Commander-in-Chief Admiral Raeder resigned.

Onslow was repaired in Russia, while Sherbrooke returned to the UK in the Obedient, and endured a series of operations on his face.

His wife, who worked in a signal office in the Admiralty, had the unsettling experience of following the progress of her husband in the Barents Sea as she was handling signals from the action.

His Victoria Cross was gazetted on January 12 1943.

Robert Sherbrooke, often described as courteous but somewhat distant, was born on January 8, 1901 at Newark, and his Naval career was almost a foregone conclusion – his father was later a Captain and his grandfather was also a Naval officer, while his grandmother was a direct descendant of Lord St Vincent.

He went to Osborne in 1913, and served in a number of ships, including battleships Canada, Iron Duke and Queen Elizabeth, torpedo gunboat Hussar, cruiser Capetown and monitor Erebus.

His first command was destroyer HMS Vanoc in Gibraltar, and he won the DSO when he commanded Cossack at the second battle of Narvik in April 1940.

After the Barents Sea, Sherbrooke returned to a variety of duties in early 1944, including command of a Naval air station and command of aircraft carrier HMS Indefatigable.

He was promoted Rear Admiral in July 1951 and retired, medically unfit, just under three years later. He later became High Sheriff of Nottingham, and died on June 13 1972.

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Letters





Hausfrau request

I READ with interest Bert Gulliver's story of his father (August issue).

My father CERA John Frederick Shaw was also with the submarine when it was lost on January 7, 1940.

From Oflag 9a, the Prussian castle turned prison camp, he wrote to his parents: "I badly need a housewife – please send me one."

This caused consternation among his gaolers – how could the Germans know that what he wanted was one of those little pouches containing needles, thread and buttons for mending clothes known as a "housewife"?

They held an enquiry and decided that no prisoner could be allowed to import a domestic servant.

The matter was eventually cleared up by a member of the Red Cross who interviewed my father about the matter.

When the letter arrived in England, workmen in a tannery at Fergate formed a penny-a-week club to send Red Cross parcels to my father – and in the first was a "housewife", which remains among the few treasured possessions of his I retain. If any of your readers knew my father I would be pleased to hear from them.– **D. Shaw,** Grays Point, New South Wales

Mystery cheque

MANY thanks for your letter and for its contained Mystery Picture winner's cheque. After ten years and more of competing I was naturally chuffed to have been successful.

I would like to donate half my winnings to the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust. As I do not know their address, I would be most grateful if you would forward my cheque to them. – **K. R. Lown,** Margate.

Mr Lown's cheque for £25 has been forwarded to the RNBT, who can be found at Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, Hants PO2 8PE . Tel 023 92 639534 – Ed

Don't let's upset the French?

PORTSMOUTH's Conservatives have submitted a Notice of Motion to the City Council to stop attempts to play down the importance of the Battle of Trafalgar.

They have done this as a response to comments made in *The News,* Portsmouth regarding the celebrations – that the City Council will be commemorating the death of Admiral Lord Nelson and will not be celebrating the decisive victory as this might upset the French.

On a personal note, as someone with a French family I do not find it offensive that we will be celebrating Trafalgar, quite the contrary, I think it is disgraceful that we would attempt to play down the victory that has shaped our city, our country and the face of Europe for the next 100 years.

The Notice of Motion reads:

- The City Council believes that the Battle of Trafalgar, 21st October 1805 is and always will be an inseparable part of Admiral Lord Nelson's life, death, the proud traditions of our Royal Navy and the history of Portsmouth.
- The City Council confirms that it will be celebrating Admiral Lord Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in addition to commemorating his tragic death
- The City Council will not play down the significance of the decisive victory at Trafalgar for political correctness and views any attempt to do so with grave concern
- The City Council intends to play a full part in the Sea Britain Festival in 2005, a major part of which will be centred on Nelson's life, his flagship and the Historic Dockyard – **Cllr Alistair Thompson,** Portsmouth

At their meeting of October 26 Portsmouth City Councillors passed a motion vowing not to play down the significance of the Battle of Trafalgar. They have allotted £700,000 towards supporting the 200th anniversary celebrations next year, which will feature a re-enactment of a Napoleonic sea battle involving eight tall ships off Southsea. – Ed

DESPITE the fact that Admiral Lord Nelson was made a Freeman of Totnes, the Councillors of Totnes, South Devon, have decided not to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar, for fear of upsetting the French.

How fortunate we are that Nelson didn't harbour such sentiments!. – **K. V. Mutlow.,** Torquay

WE moved from Norfolk to Widley, Hants 19 years ago and with us brought a connection with the life of Nelson. From generation to generation it was said my wife's six times great grandmother was nurse and housekeeper to the young Nelson when his mother died.

It is known that after Nelson left Burnham Thorpe to join the Navy Mary Blacket married a Mr John High. They were landlords of the Ship Inn at Brancasterf in Norfolk.

Nelson, on one of the occasions he returned home, called one of Mary's sons 'Valiant' – and for the next three generations the male members of the family were known locally as 'Valiant' High.

There is little evidence of the relationship of Mary Blacket to Lord Nelson other than what is written in the Parish records – problems of record keeping were also compounded because neither Mary, John nor any of their children for many generations could read or write.

Much evidence of Nelson's social life and relationships was kept hidden and sabotaged by the Victorians, so maybe new information will come to light. – **R. Nichols**, Widley, Hants.





MY MOTHER gave me this brooch when I was 15 years of age in 1937.

My understanding was that it was issued to selected recipients at schools throughout New Zealand.

It is still mounted o the original navy blue velvet backing.

I would be interested to know if any other identical brooches are in existence.

The wording on the reverse side is: "Centenary memento of the Death of Nelson 1805 Oct 21 1905 Containing Copper from HMS Victory. The Gift of the Lords of the Admiralty to British & Foreign Sailors Society. ER VII" – **D. MacGregor,** Sevenoaks, Kent, ex RNZN/RNZNVR/RNR

THE TUC is seeking three extra Bank Holidays per year to bring the UK in line with the European average. Among the new suggested holiday dates is Trafalgar Day, October 21.

I hope your readers will join me in lobbying MPs and others with influence to honour this great Victory and its architect Lord Nelson. – **Bob Seaman,** Milton Keynes

Satanism 'a step too far'

I WOULD submit that Satanism being 180 degrees opposed to Christian and most other religious beliefs is a 'step too far' and simply cannot be called a religion or tolerated in the Royal Navy

Would you want your son or daughter to go to serve onboard a ship where these satanic principles were officially supported? Recruiting certainly won't be improved by this further politically correct move!

Don't we still launch our ships saying 'God bless her and all who sail in her' and in granite over the RN College at Dartmouth say 'It is upon the Navy, under the good providence of God, That the wealth, safety and strength of the kingdom do chiefly depend'? – **M. Critchley,** Liskeard, Cornwall.

ALBATROSSES and whistling up the wind are sailor's lore, but Satanism has no place above or below decks.

In Navy News there is always a strong sense of the 'days or yore'. From Trafalgar and before to the present day I'm sure that all those proud faces we see in every issue would be horrified to hear of this latest piece of modern day constitutional rights.

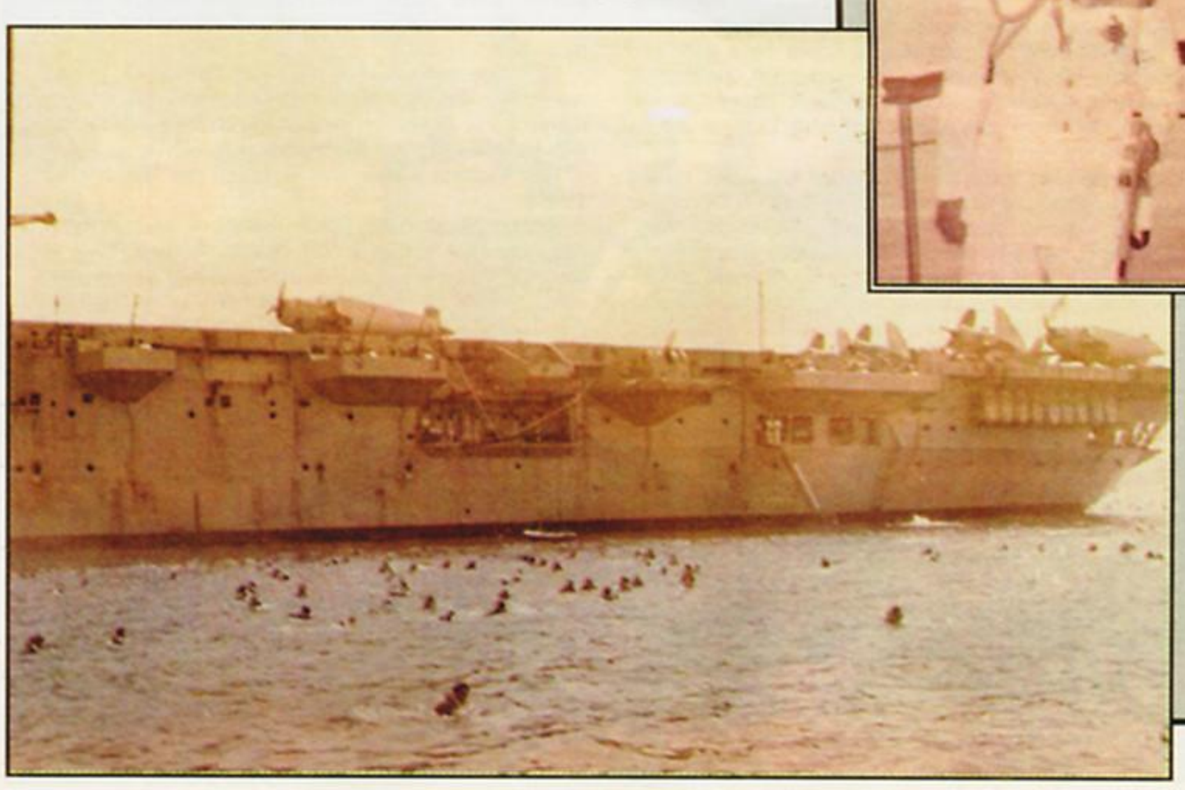
Prior to battle stations and indeed before heading for a storm there was always a prayer to almighty God – 'Eternal Father, strong to save'. It is part of our heritage. May it long continue – it's always served us well. – **M. Warr,** Barrydale

❑ Newsview, page 20

All hands abandon ship . . .

THANKS for forwarding the letters regarding my request for information on the 1952 Mediterranean banyan at Navarin with Mountbatten in which HMCS Magnificent took part. I enclose a picture of the 'abandon ship' exercise the great man ordered – all hands other than duty watch had to take part – together with one of him on the brow. – J. Sullivan, **Toronto**





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Letters

MINE LEFT ME 3/4in SHORTER

IT WAS with great interest that I read the article 'Only the Valiant' (October issue and November Letters).

At that time I was an acting PO Tel on Admiral Cunningham's staff.

After the attack by the Italian human torpedoes C-in-C Mediterranean's people were evacuated to Ismailia. Then I was sent to Port Tewfik and later drafted back to England via Cape Town.

I spent a hectic period in the Captain-Class frigate HMS Ekins based at Chatham and chasing E-boats and hydrofoils all over the North Sea. Ekins eventually ran over a 'ratchet' mine and limped back to Chatham with her bottom flattened instead of V-shaped. The dockyard and Admiralty officials took one look and wrote her off.

When that mine exploded under the Ekins I was sitting in the radio office in my nice armchair – and I swear I went up three feet or more and landed back in my chair.

I suffered from back pains in later life and it was found I had a crushed vertebra in my lower back. This was surgically removed and so I am now three quarters of an inch shorter. – G. Owen, Birmingham

THERE was an interesting sequel to the Italian human torpedo story. The Captain of the Valiant, Charles Morgan, was later promoted Rear Admiral and after the Italian surrender became Admiral Commanding Taranto and the Adriatic.

What followed is best described in Morgan's own words, from his narrative of the attack which is displayed beside one of the chariots in the naval museum in Venice:

"In March 1945 the Crown Prince of Italy came down to Taranto to inspect the Italian ships and establishments. I lunched with him on the second day and accompanied him during his inspections which included a visit to St Vito Barracks where a presentation of medals was to take place.

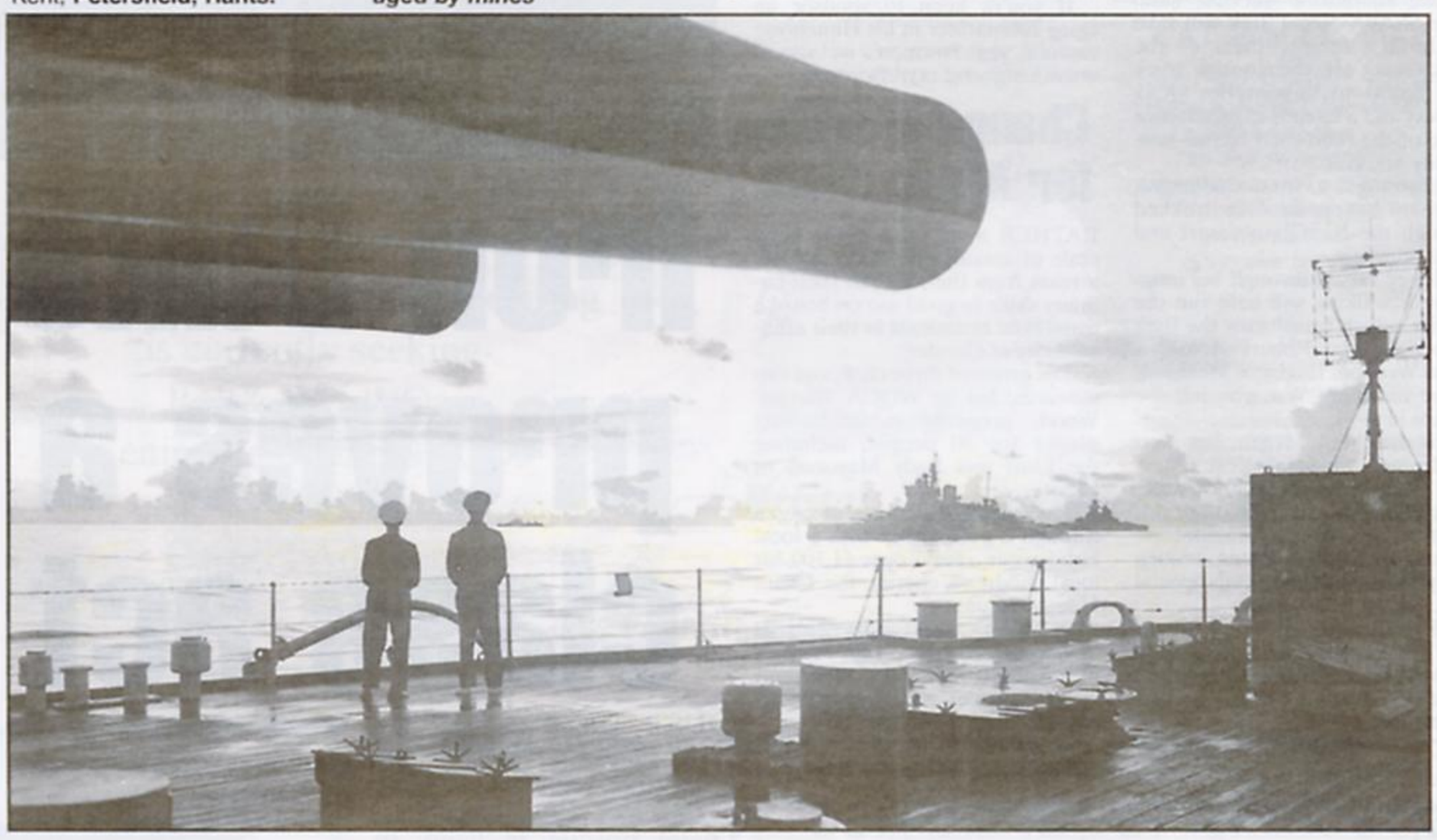
"The first officer to be decorated with the Italian Gold Medal for Valour (equivalent to our Victoria Cross) was Lt de la Penne, for his attack on HMS Valiant on December 19, 1941.

"After the citation had been read out, Lt de la Penne came forward to the platform. As he did so, the Crown Prince turned round and said: 'Come on Morgan, this is your show!' I stepped forward, took the medal from the Crown Prince's hand and pinned it on Lt de la Penne's breast.

"I thus had the pleasure and honour of decorating Lt de la Penne with the highest award granted by the Italian Navy for the very courageous and gallant attack he made on my ship three years and three months before!" – Capt B. H. Kent, Petersfield, Hants.



● *MINED: HMS Ekins (top) and HMS Queen Elizabeth seen from HMS Valiant with the British Eastern Fleet during operations against Sabang, Northern Sumatra in 1944. All were severely damaged by mines*



Light touch of joker Fred

SOMEBODY lent me your April issue and I spotted a photograph of Lord Mountbatten in the feature on HMS Eaglet. I also recognised the man in the next picture, holding a dog.

Fred Dalton was the Senior Shipkeeper there in 1970 when I, as an Australian member of a Work Study Team under training and conducting a practical application study into the work of RNR Shipkeepers, used those at HMS Eaglet as our first shore training centre for the study.

Fred was a great practical joker. Once he went to the Magic Shop in Liverpool and bought one of those trick electric light bulbs that light up when a little button on the base is pressed.

He had just finished putting in a new battery when Lt Cdr Verge, the OIC, came into his office to ask about the work requirements for the weekend.

As he tightened the cap, Fred went into a tirade about one of the permanent RN petty officers attached.

"What's wrong, Mr Dalton?" asked the OIC.

"One of your petty officers threw away this light bulb, sir, and the damn thing still works – look!" He held up the bulb and pressed the button.

"These things cost money and we can't afford to throw money away like that."

"I quite agree, Mr Dalton. Give me the man's name and I will give him a severe dressing down. This may be an old vessel, but we can't afford to waste money that can be better spent on things that matter."

We left Fred's office in a hurry. – **A. G. Spearpoint**, Bomaderry, New South Wales.

Lucky escape

REGARDING your article 'Exeter pays tribute to victims of Java Sea' (September issue), my late father Leading Cook F. Hanley served in HMS Exeter but for reason of severe health problems it was decided to transfer him to a hospital ship at Singapore on December 10, 1941.

I'm quite sure he would not have survived the Battle of the Java Sea or captivity afterward.

He served 29 years with the Royal Navy, 1913-35 and also 1938-45. In March 13, 1942 his wife received a telegram: "Deeply regret to inform you that the ship in which your husband Frederick Hanby Leading Cook NG D/M 5635 is believed to have been serving has been sunk in the Battle of the Java Seas. He must therefore be regarded as missing on active service." – **R. K. Hanley,** Leicester

Soccer scribes

I WAS very interested to read under 'Time of Your Lives' 40 years ago (October issue) an article on a football match by RN Haslemere.

I actually played in that match, and am proud to say was partly responsible for our success, together with skipper Brian Walcroft. Our team consisted of nine writers and two Comms ratings.

My memory can't recall the whole team, but I do remember Pete Catton, Bob Hills and Billy Heslop.

In 1964 most teams played the old style 2-3-5 formation but Godalming and Farncombe adopted a style new in those days of 4-2-4. They used a short passing game and usually had their opponents ragged and chasing shadows.

We had suffered similarly before. For this match, away from home, we decided to put another centre half in, and use a Long ball game, using the speed of our two wingers. It worked like a dream and we knocked them out of their stride.

RN Haslemere enjoyed a very successful time while CND was at Lythe Hill House, mostly due to the Drafting Chief's knowledge and bringing good footballers of the Writer Branch to Haslemere. – **Bob Mason**, Horsham, West Sussex.

Road rage over flags

THE sight of the Union Flag being flown upside down annoys me no end, too, shipmate Hallas (October issue). On certain layby fast food snack bars some of them fly the flag – at least half of them the wrong way up. There is no excuse. – **D. Whitfield,** Silloth on Solway, Cumbria



Helping Hands

Norman nips off to Nepal for SSAFA

AGE is no barrier for former submariner Norman Young, an energetic 76, who is heading off to the Himalayas for SSAFA Forces Help.

In company with ex-SAS man Chris Ryan and 50 others, Norman will be journeying through the distant mountains early next year.

Norman, who spent 21 years in the submarine service, said: "The SSAFA Nepal Trek will take us through remote parts of the Himalayas, off the tourist track with access to monasteries along the way and a chance to experience some of the renowned Nepali hospitality and culture."

No stranger to these challenges, Norman has previously trekked through the Namibian desert and across Brazil.

Money raised through his long-distance walking will help run the charity, which transforms the lives of people like Robert Adkin, a Naval Weapons Engineer Mechanic in the first Gulf War who left the service in 1991.

His daughter, Megan, has Rett Syndrome, a neurological illness that leaves her incapable of walking and talking, and with other difficulties. Megan can communicate through facial expressions, smiling and giggling, but she needs special care.

SSAFA helped raise £3,500 so that the family home could be adapted to make Megan's life, and those of her family, easier for day-to-day living.

Early October saw people across the country get involved in events to make a difference to Servicemen and women's lives as part of SSAFA Forces Help Week, with different activities from charity brew-ups to fundraising dinner parties.

If you would like any more information on SSAFA Forces Help, telephone 020 7463 8783 or visit *www.ssafa.org.uk*.

If you're keen to sponsor an aging submariner in his Himalayan exploits, visit Norman's website at *www.justgiving.com/brigham*.

Change in scale for Albion chefs

RATHER more used to the large scale of assault ship HMS Albion, a team from the ship put their culinary skills to good use on board a canal boat restaurant in their affiliated city of Chester.

The group of three chefs and two stewards, led by WOCA 'Slinger' Wood, prepared a fundraising dinner for 40 people, including the Lord and Lady Mayoress of Chester.

The splended evening, arranged through a partnership with a local hotelowner, raised over £1,100 for local children's charity, the Claire House Hospice.

POCA 'Dickie' Hasler said: "It was strange for the team to work in a kitchen that wasn't constantly moving, but we all thoroughly enjoyed the experience."



Golden steps for niece's joy

A TREKKING expedition to the 'Lost City of the Incas', Machu Picchu, lured Lt Cdr Louis Wilson-Chalon to pull on his walking boots and put on his fundraising cap.

Louis set out to raise over £2,800 towards sending his niece Jasmine Gaylard to swim with dolphins in the USA. Jasmine has severe disablities, and will never walk, talk, eat or even drink normally, and for her communication is almost impossible.

The chance to take part in this adventurous training expedition came about while working for Director Army Aviation in Middle Wallop.

A group of 12 from the Army and Navy tackled the high-altitude trek through lush vegetation, fast-flowing rivers, Inca ruins and isolated hamlets, where wanting to boost the income of the villagers, the visitors made sure they bought some of the local produce – which just happened to be beer...

Despite a bridge being washed away, the intrepid group overcame all obstacles to reach their lofty hidden goal.

Louis said: "It was a fabulous and unforgettable trip that provided a fitting end to a most interesting and rewarding appointment with the Army."

● *Expedition organiser Major Phil Green (Army), Jasmine and Lt Cdr Louis Wilson-Chalon*

Another fine mess result for hospital

THE petty officer's mess from HMS Newcastle visited their affiliated charity, ill children at the city's Newcastle General Hospital.

Mess president PO 'Monty' Montgomery presented the ward sister with a cheque for £1,000 along with a large selection of toys and Playstation games – the fruits of dog-racing theme nights on the flight deck and in the POs' mess.

The mess has had close links with the ward over the years and though HMS Newcastle bows out soon, sailors hope that the bond with the RN continues for many years to come.

Six of the best from Raleigh

SAILORS and civilian employees at HMS Raleigh put their best foot forward for the establishment's adopted charity, Churchtown Farm, running three miles from Torpoint to the nearby village of Antony and back.

Each runner paid an entrance fee of £1 and prizes were awarded to the fastest male and female competitors.

Churchtown, near Lostwithiel, is a respite care and holiday centre for adults and children with physical and learning disabilities.

Raleigh adopted Churchtown in 1985 and since then has raised more than £20,000 for the centre.

Manager, Gabbie Robinson, said: "We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from Raleigh – it has made an enormous difference in the lives of the children and adults we care for."

Iron Duke proves a class act

JUST DAYS before the bell rang for class for the first time, a team of 40 from HMS Iron Duke turned up, paint brushes in hand, to transform a West African school.

Freetown, Sierra Leone, was the first port of call for the frigate after setting out on her South Atlantic deployment in mid September.

The brightness of the children's orange uniforms was only matched by their smiles on seeing the arrival of their Royal Naval visitors.

With only enough paint to complete half the school, some Naval ingenuity with paint thinner, ten brushes and a sense of humour, Iron Duke's team finished the job with only hours to spare before the school's official opening.

Local community leaders and members of the government and military attended the ceremony to herald the new school's start.

Cdr Peter Carden, commanding officer of HMS Iron Duke, said: "This was a rare and humbling experience for the ship's company of Iron Duke to provide assistance to the innocent generation in this desperately poor country.

"What little we provided will no doubt remain a vivid memory to the children at the Lewab Boyd Preparatory School in Freetown, and to those ship's company who participated."

A local orphanage also benefitted from a clothing collection by the ship prior to sailing.

The three-day visit to the West African state also saw the frigate provide basic navigation, seamanship, firefighting and first aid training to members of the Sierra Leone Maritime Wing.



● *Crew from HMS Iron Duke help out at a school in Sierra Leone*

Sea Harriers to be replaced by... bikes?!

AS A LAST thank you to their current home in Yeovil, Naval personnel from 899 Naval Air Squadron said goodbye to Sea Harriers and hello to bicycles in the run-up to their final farewell.

A 219-mile cycle ride took the team from old to new, RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset to RAF Wittering in Cambridgeshire, netting £1,500 for the Flying Colours Appeal at Yeovil Hospital and the Time Together Trust, which helps parents and children share quality time.

AEMs Rob Carolan and Steve Capper said: "The cycle ride was a great success – we had fantastic weather, lots of support from the squadron and the public, and even managed to put our engineering skills to good use in repairing the odd puncture on route!"

899 NAS will disband in March next year, becoming part of 20(R) Squadron at RAF Wittering, the home of Joint Force Harrier.

■ THE STRONG links between Yeovilton air station and local community are set to continue, with the commanding officer Cdre Alan Bennett recently visiting Ilchester Primary School and donating £100 to the school to buy aviation-themed books to feed the children's interest in flying.

Walk to wheel of wonder

TEN crew members from HMS Illustrious completed a 15-mile sponsored walk from Edinburgh to the Falkirk Wheel, while the carrier was in the latter stages of a £120million refit in nearby Rosyth.

Led by CPO 'Jumper' Collins and the Rev Bernard Clarke, they raised just over £300 for the Seagull Trust, which helps disabled people enjoy the delights of boating on the Edinburgh canal using its specially modified boat. The wheel is the world's only rotating boat lift – and a tourist attraction.

Excellent effort for hospital

HMS Excellent raised £837 for Mary Ward in Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham. The money, raised at various mess events, will be used to buy a much needed oxygen saturation monitor for the ward which looks after stroke victims of all ages throughout the acute stage of their illness.

Rivalry put on hold for a day

ARDENT Pompey fan WO (PT) Ian Binks and avid Saints supporter PO (AWW) Emery raised £280 between them by exchanging football kits and sporting the opposite's colours when they joined colleagues from HMS Collingwood in a fun-run. Some 145 personnel from the Fareham establishment took part in the national Red Sock mile run, raising £500.

Pots of coffee

NAVAL caffeine addicts turned their weakness to good use in aid of Macmillan Cancer Relief. The World's Biggest Coffee Morning saw sailors and staff at the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood down £368 worth of cuppas. The event was organised by a team from the Communications Warfare Training Unit.



● *The Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, Dr John Moses, blesses Jamie Weller's hot-air balloon*

Lofty heights for blind ambition

FORMER Aircraft Engineer Jamie Weller is set to be the first blind pilot to cross the skies of London in a hot air balloon.

Jamie, who served in 899 Naval Air Squadron for three years, began to lose his sight and in 1990 went for help to St Dunstan's, the charity that cares for blind ex-Service men and women.

Once given the necessary training and independent living skills by St Dunstan's, Jamie went on to achieve a degree and forge a career as a tax adviser for Deloitte.

For more information, visit the website: *www.st-dunstans.org.uk*.

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VAUXHALL

People

Five go mad on Dartmoor

FIVE sailors from minehunter HMS Hurworth swapped pusser's grey for pongo khaki when they joined their affiliated Army unit.

The Tyne Tees Regiment invited the sailors to take part in an exercise on Dartmoor.

Having been taught basic infantry and reconnaissance skills, the sailors headed off into the dark on a night patrol.

The sailors – dubbed the 'fabulous five' by shipmates in the Portsmouth-based Hunt-class warship – successfully concluded the war games by marching four miles in an hour carrying a 45lb bergen, rifle and webbing.

"It was a worthwhile experience seeing how the other half lived," said OM(MW) Nick Cook, "but I definitely prefer being in the Navy."

Boarding school for Jamaican guest

JAMAICA'S defence adviser watched one of the busiest training centres in the Senior Service in action when he called upon HMS Raleigh.

Col Linton Graham was invited to the RN's 'boarding school' – or Military Training School to give it its correct title – where sailors are educated in the art of boarding and searching vessels.

Since the September 11 atrocities, boarding has become even more of a staple diet for RN personnel.

It has long been practised in the Gulf and in the Caribbean, where a British warship is regularly deployed on drugbusting duties.

Col Linton observed HMS Argyll's crew put through their paces by Maj Willie Hannah and his NMT team in their mv Cossack training centre, a mock-up of a merchantman.

Beyond boarding procedures, the school teaches ship and personal protection techniques, using among other kit, the best firing ranges in the RN and two indoor electronic small arms trainers.

Having inspected the school, Col Graham watched new-entry trainees being educated in Senior Service life and took the salute as the latest batch of new recruits passed into the Navy.



● *All present and correct: Col Graham inspects new sailors passing in at HMS Raleigh*

David's days of sail are not yet over

STEPPING down after 49 years' service to the RN as a sailor and teacher at the Joint Services Adventure Sail Training Centre in Gosport, David Meeker isn't quite ready to give up his association with the sea.

The 65-year-old joined the Senior Service as a boy seaman in 1955, the beginning of a 34-year career in the RN above and beneath the waves.

He subsequently spent 15 years with JSASTC passing on his knowledge of the sea to youngsters – squeezing in a round-the-world race and joint service sailing expeditions to Russia and Africa among others.

Although he has just retired from the sail training centre, Mr Meeker will continue with part-time work with the RN and Royal Yachting Association.



● *As clean as a whistle... and that's just the aircrew: the restored Gannet at the gate to the Scottish SAR unit*

Gannet goes from 'grotty' to gleaming

AS R&R goes, the aircrew of Gannet Search and Rescue Flight will hope their Commanding Officer doesn't insist on too much.

The Prestwick-based unit was put to work (as a slice of rest and relaxation) cleaning up the historic Fairey Gannet which stands at the entrance to the base.

There was, say the Gannet team, some "stinging comments" in August's issue of *Navy News* (the gate guardian was labelled "very shoddy, covered in bird droppings and dirt" by a correspondent) which prompted the clean-up by CO Lt Cdr Mark Deller.

Gannet's Gannet served the RN from 1960 onwards with HMS Hermes, Ark Royal, Victorious, Centaur and Eagle initially in anti-submarine warfare and subsequently on airborne early-warning duties.

For aircraft enthusiasts not near Gannet, there was another opportunity to see a fine specimen of the bulbous plane at the Imperial War Museum in Duxford.

A fine selection of Fleet Air Arm aircraft past and present were put on show at the Flying Legends autumn show.

Besides a Gannet, a Sea Vixen, AEW Sea King and a brace of Sea Harriers were on show to the public (none took part in the flying displays).

The RN Historic Flight provided the aerial thrills, a Sea Fury and Sea Hawk taking to the skies; the latter, says *Navy News* reader Mick Britton from York, "put on a sprightly performance before teaming up with other classic jets – F86 and T33 – for formation passes".





● *The wreath left by Sultan apprentices at the RND memorial at Beaucourt and (above) a World War I recruitment poster for the division*

Trainee sailors pay respects

ENGINEERING trainees from HMS Sultan learned the sacrifices made by sailors in the trenches of the Western Front when they made a pilgrimage to France and Belgium.

A group of 47 marine and aero engineering apprentices plus staff from the Gosport training establishment crossed the Channel ahead of Remembrance Week to tour Flanders and the Somme – in particular the ground fought over by the Royal Naval Division.

The RND served with distinction on the Western Front and Gallipoli, earning praise from Winston Churchill and begrudging respect from the mainstream Army.

Throughout the war, the division resisted all attempts to be Armyised, instead sticking with Naval ranks, Naval terminology and customs and, of course, flying the White Ensign.

The Sultan party paid homage at the Menin Gate in Ypres – the division fought at Third Ypres, better known as Passchedaele – where the names of nearly 55,000 Commonwealth dead with no known graves are inscribed. The Last Post is sounded nightly almost 90 years after the guns fell silent.

"It was the highlight of the visit," said Sultan's Alex Manning.

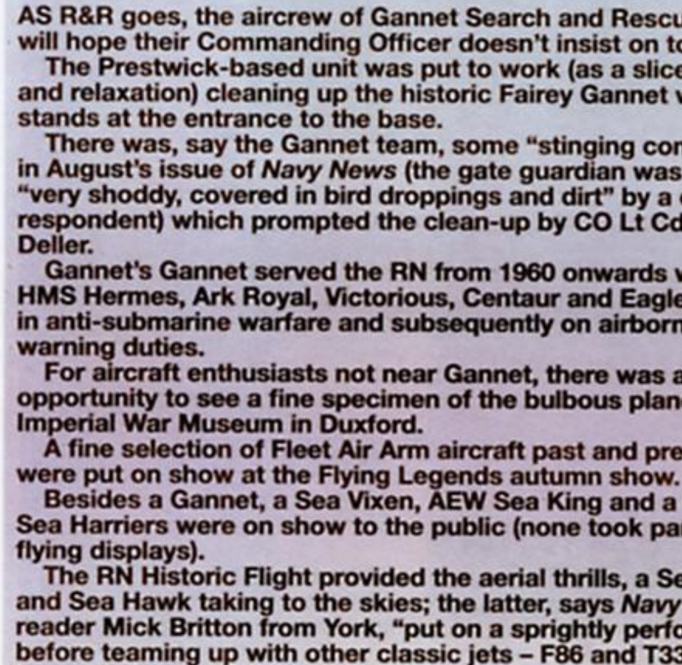
"A wreath was laid by AEA/A Richard Pickles, the youngest member of the group, and a further source of pride was that many of the 300-400 spectators, including some WW II veterans, approached members of the party afterwards and said how good it was to see the RN present and represented so well.

"Altogether, a memorable night to be proud of."

Further respects were paid on the Somme – the RND memorial on the Western Front can be found in Beaucourt – including the imposing Thiepval memorial to the missing, honouring 73,000 Great War dead.

Even within the Royal Navy the commitment made by the Division is not especially known, although its role has become more widely appreciated in recent years, largely due to a successful campaign to re-site its memorial in the heart of London.

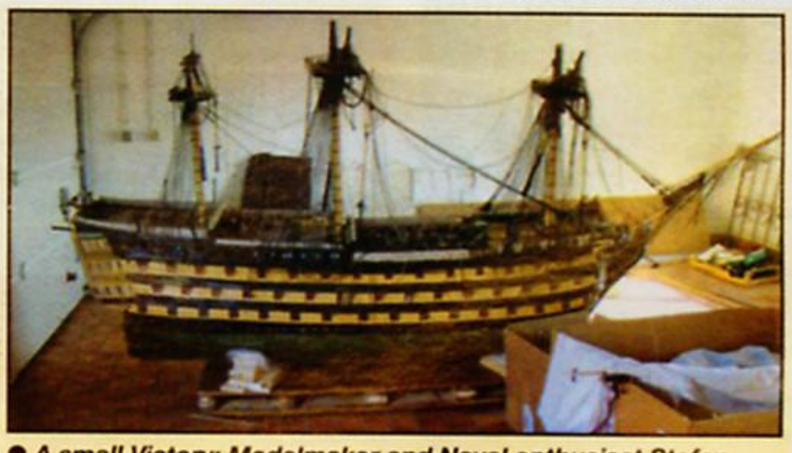
In four years of war, 125,000 men were rotated through the division; it suffered 47,000 casualties, 11,000 of them fatal – accounting for 40 per cent of the Senior Service's total casualties in the entire conflict.



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● *A small Victory: Modelmaker and Naval enthusiast Stefan Krapf is looking for a fitting home for his 1/24 scale model of Nelson's Trafalgar flagship in time for next year's bicentennial events. The 15ft replica has outgrown Stefan's home in Flossenbürg in Germany. The professional toolmaker has been building models of Victory since 1988 after he was inspired by a painting of the first-rate warship. Stefan can be contacted via e-mail on sk@HMShip.com and other examples of his work, including a model of HMS Clio, can be seen on www.HMShip.com*

Ice of you to drop in on us

HMS Endurance's fliers have been doing their bit for community relations by dropping in on schools in southern England in their Lynx.

The 212 Flight aircraft from 815 NAS at Yeovilton has been in the skies of Kent and Hampshire in the run-up to the Antarctic survey ship's annual deployment south.

The Lynx, crewed by Lts Mark Jameson, Karl Weston and Simon Collins, landed in the grounds of Manor Field Infant School, Basingstoke and Cheam School, Headley (attended by two children of the ship's CO Capt Thomas Karsten).

Leaving Hampshire skies behind, the trio flew into Maidstone Grammar (Lt Weston is an ex-pupil) and Darrick Wood Secondary School (attended by Lt Collins' niece) in Kent.

Lord Lieutenant watches next wave of sailors

LORD Lieutenant of Cornwall, Lady Mary Holborow, dropped in on HMS Raleigh to watch civvies being turned into sailors.

Lady Mary was given a tour of the Torpoint establishment's cookery school, clambered aboard one of the RIBs and visited the DRIU – Damage Repair Instructional Unit – which teaches sailors how to shore up damaged warships.

It was the first visit by the Lord Lieutenant – the Queen's official representative in Cornwall – since Raleigh revamped its training regime for the 21st century.

Holme not alone

FOUR officers can relive their schooldays after being posted to Portsmouth at the same time.

Capts Ian Beaumont and Steve Greenwood, Cdr Graham Charlesworth and Lt Cdr Phil Dickinson are all products of Holme Valley Grammar School in West Yorkshire.

The quartet attended the school in '*Last of the Summer Wine* country' in the mid 1970s and early '80s.

Three of the officers have spent the bulk of their careers flying Sea Kings based at Culdrose; most of Cdr Charlesworth's time in the Senior Service has been with submarines based in Devonport and Faslane.

"It's sheer coincidence that we have ended up in Portsmouth at the same time," said Capt Beaumont. "It seemed a good idea to get together and reminisce about our schooldays under the stewardship of Ronnie Beaumont, Brian Precious and Miss Less."

Correction

A caption in page 32 of October's issue (*Only the Valiant*) transposed the names of Lt Cdr Tom Hunt and Adrian Holloway. We apologise for the error.

People in the News

Gordon gets 'em swinging

ORDINARILY phrases such as 'ba-boo-dah' and 'bum-de-dum' won't mean anything to anyone out of nappies.

But Royal Marines bandsmen and women understand the instructions of Gordon Campbell perfectly.

Then again he is one of the world's leading trombonists – and a big band specialist.

Gordon has just taken over at the Royal Marines' School of Music in Portsmouth as its trombone professor (another world-renowned musician, Don Lusher, preceeded him).

What Gordon brings to the trainee musicians is that professional edge, says Maj Andy Thornhill, the school's Director of Music Training.

That is not surprising. Viewers of *Parkinson* see Gordon perform each Saturday night with the chat show host's resident Laurie Holloway Big Band.

Since 1984 he has also been lead trombonist with the BBC's Big Band and other artists of note he has accompanied include Robbie Williams, the late Ray Charles, Tony Bennett, Ella Fitzgerald and Barbra Streisand.

"Gordon has a style all of his own and the students are responding well to his expert tuition," said Maj Thornhill.

That style includes plenty of hand signals – two thumbs up for the students if all is going well – picking up his trombone to play alongside the bandsmen, and even stepping in on percussion, although he insists he "doesn't play the drums".

The trombonist, a former Army musician (he wanted to join the RM Band but they had no room for another trombonist back in 1968) added: "The important things for the band to learn are intensity and 'one-ness'. It's teaching people not to think 'this is my part' but to get them to all sound as if they are one player.

"I try to make lessons fun – often when you study music you lose sight of the reason why you started. The more you enjoy something, the more you learn."

Gordon is one of 32 civilian and military music professors who pass on their expertise to the 40 or so trainees who enter the school each year. At the moment he's overseeing lessons once a week.

"It's amazing the little things he spots. He's bang on with the accuracy of the sound. When it comes to trombone playing, he is the man," Maj Thornhill explained.

"A lot of people don't realise we do the big band sound. Gordon brings us experience. You can hear the difference he makes. It changes the band's sound for the better."



● *Swing when you're winning: Gordon Campbell (centre) joins in with trainees at the RM Band School of Music*

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicola Harper

For meritorious service and devotion to duty

THE invaluable contribution of three Naval officers to last year's operations in Iraq was recognised by the political head of the world's largest Fleet when he visited the RN's nerve centre in Portsmouth.

US Secretary to the Navy Gordon R England presented Rear Admiral David Snelson, Cdre Jamie Miller and Capt Nicholas Lambert with the US Order of Merit.

Admiral Snelson headed RN forces in the Gulf during Telic, Capt Lambert served as his chief-of-staff and Cdre Miller was in charge of the amphibious assault aboard flagship HMS Ark Royal.

The trio were singled out by their US colleagues for "exceptionally meritorious services, exemplary performance, dynamic leadership and exceptional devotion to duty."

Besides presenting the medals Mr England, the 73rd Secretary of the Navy, was given a tour of the new Fleet headquarters building on Whale Island

Tom's devotion rewarded

RESERVIST Lt Cdr Tom Shannon has clocked up a milestone on the Clyde having completed 25 years serving the local University Royal Naval Unit.

Since 1979, the officer has been an ever-present, first with HMS Attacker and now with HMS Smiter, providing support, advice and training at sea and on adventurous exercises to the students of Glasgow and Strathclyde URNU.

His dedication has been rewarded by the RN's regional officer for Scotland and Northern Ireland, Cdre Angus Sandford, who presented Tom with a pocket watch at the URNU's Trafalgar night dinner.

"The URNUs would not be the professional and successful organisations they are without reservists like Tom.

"He is vital to the unit and synonymous with it," said Smiter's Commanding Officer Lt Zoe Watts.



● *Bat'll do nicely: Cdr Ian Annett (right) presents a baseball bat to WO Ian Binks – a reverse of a presentation made by their fathers 48 years ago*

Men have same name*

WHEN Cdr Ian Annett presented WO Ian Binks with a baseball bat at HMS Collingwood he was re-enacting a gesture played out by their fathers 48 years ago – in rather more magnificent surroundings.

It was at the Melbourne Olympics of 1956 that PO(PTI) John 'Jo' Binks handed CPO John Annett a bat.

The two sailors were serving together aboard cruiser HMS Newcastle during a Far East deployment.

Annett and Binks senior lost touch when they left the Geordie Gunboat, but contact resumed via the HMS Newcastle Association when Mr Annett learned the two men's sons were serving at the Fareham Maritime Warfare School – and, like dads, had the same first names.

Many post-war era sailors will remember Binks senior, who today lives in Las Vegas; he was a sporting stalwart, captaining both the RN hockey and squash teams. His son followed him into the PT branch; he has just left Collingwood to become deputy area recreation officer.

Mr Annett, who lives in Sherborne, was a senior shipwright in Newcastle; his son is Commander (Capability Development) at Collingwood.

And the significance of the bat? "When the ship finished its commission, we gave away the sports equipment," said Mr Binks. "John quite fancied the bat and ball."

* *With apologies to* The Simpsons *for the headline.*

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Community in today's Service

The Chaplain of the Fleet wonders whatever happened to the likely lads – and to the hot cross bun?



Chaplain of the Fleet Barry Hammett has found a new spirituality among today's young Navy people. Yes, really – and much of it with the Royal Marines.

He told *Navy News* it sprang in part from the close sense of community they shared with their chaplains.

"Royal Marines have always had a warm appreciation of the work their chaplains do and of what their chaplains are for – and they have a long history of their chaplains actually deploying with them on operations," he said.

"But set alongside that there is a sense that young people today are much more aware of the spiritual dimension to their lives than their counterparts were a generation or so back.

"When I joined the Naval chaplaincy 27 years ago – actually at the Royal Marines Training Centre at Lympstone in Devon – I got very little response from the young recruits. It was like talking to a brick wall.

"Going back there recently and giving a short sermon on the Sunday morning, I found them leaning forward, paying close attention. There was eye contact and real interest."

In some ways this sea change reflected the way society as a whole had lately come to view spiritual matters, the Archdeacon averred.

"After World War II there was quite a decline in appreciation of the established Church – in modern parlance, it became very uncool. There was instead a strong focus on self-reliance and a more humanistic approach – the feeling that everything we needed was within ourselves.

"Yet in my time there has been a growing interest, not just in the Christian religion, but in spiritual matters more generally. This was first manifested in the 1960s when leaders of popular culture, like the Beatles, were attracted by eastern religions and philosophies – and with that came the realisation that there was more to life than just the 'now' culture.

"This has to be welcomed, because its sits against the backdrop that the Christian religion has also developed over the past millennium. So there are opportunities for making the connection that were not there 30 or 40 years ago.

"I think, too, there is not the same cynicism and scepticism in society today that there was then – a lot of the baggage has been ditched. And going back much further, in the Church of England there is growing recognition that the community expression of religion has changed shape over the past century.

"I've been doing a fair bit of research into family history and if you look at the censuses of the 19th century you quickly discover that people didn't move very far in those days – the furthest you might look for a marriage partner, for instance, was probably only a couple of villages away.

"So, geographically, you would have a very close sense of community. Whereas today, of course, we have a quite different understanding of what community means. It is not just in the parish where you live because, by and large, that's not the place where you work or where the rest of your family are living or where you spend your leisure time.

"And now we have the Internet – the virtual community – which may have its faults, but also its virtues in bringing people together."

'New Age' spirituality notwithstanding, the Navy's main link man in matters of all faiths ("We are very much aware of the fact that we need to grow into a multi-faith chaplaincy and studies are fully underway in that direction") still reckoned that observance of the traditional Christian calendar had relevance – even though Christmas itself had been reduced to "nothingvmore than a shopping opportunity".

"I was reading a book about Walt Disney – videos of his cartoon features are always promoted as ideal Christmas presents, aren't they? It said he was a committed Christian – but in all his films I think you would be hard pressed to find God mentioned in any of them.

"There was a key phrase that stuck in my mind – 'Everyone in Disneyland is happy, but nobody's holy'.

"I think the festivals are still important – but they have become overshadowed by the way commercialism has taken over. We've seen it happen with Christmas for a long time – but increasingly we see it happening with Easter, too.

"So many of the symbols have lost their original relevance. Take hot cross buns – I can remember a time when you could only get hot cross buns on Good Friday. Today you can buy them all year long.

"So they have simply become a consumer item – the symbolism of the hot cross bun has vanished."

The Naval Service still retained many of the traditional values of community, though – in which its chaplains could contribute "in a very special way".

"I suppose that has always been true of the Corps – more than of the surface Fleet, certainly more than of its smaller elements. You can achieve that on a capital ship which has a full-time chaplain. It is less straightforward for a chaplain to have that kind of relationship if he is only able to visit a small ship when she is alongside for a couple of weeks."

The big bonus a chaplain to the Royal Marines had came from his "shared experience".

"But he does have to walk a bit of a tightrope between being seen as 'one of the lads' and making a difference in offering a set of standards that not all of them will necessarily subscribe to.

"I often say to prospective chaplains that it is a very 'incarnational' ministry. A lot of ordinary parish priests are dedicated, hardworking, very effective ministers of the gospel – but they don't have that business of whatever their people are experiencing, they are experiencing too.

"In contrast, our chaplains are alongside their people in everything they do – whether it's a Force 12 in the Bay of Biscay or a trench in Iraq.

"And that is hugely important – and particularly self-evident in the Corps where a chaplain has gone to Lympstone himself, done the Commando course and won his green beret."

❑ CTCRM praised for 'spiritual and moral support' – see p15. See also Newsview, p20

As Chaplain of the Fleet and Director General Naval Chaplaincy Service, the Ven Barry Hammett, seen here visiting the Royal Marines in Northern Ireland, is responsible for overall Chaplaincy policy in addition to his role as Principal Anglican Chaplain and Archdeacon for the Royal Navy



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No room for Satanism among world faiths

Two weeks after the Chaplain of the Fleet gave the above interview, the story broke in the national press that a member of the ship's company of HMS Cumberland had asked his CO to register him as a Satanist. This is the Archdeacon's response:

I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on the issue of Satanism in the Royal Navy which, like your correspondents, I believe to be a serious matter, not just for the Royal Navy, but for the Armed Services in general.

I would like to clarify some of the points reported in the press. Leading Hand Cranmer applied to his Commanding Officer for permission to change the religion recorded on his Service Documents from "no religion" to "other beliefs", one of the accepted designations. Routine procedures were followed, it was ascertained that his application was genuine and he appeared at the Table in the normal way, where permission was granted.

The Armed Forces regard personal beliefs as a private matter, and it was accordingly agreed that Leading Hand Cranmer could read his scripture in private.

At no time did he request permission to carry out satanistic rituals on board.

If an individual's practice causes genuine concerns to those with whom he serves or if operational capability is adversely affected there are remedies which the Command will apply.

The press reports in many cases suggested that the Royal Navy has "officially recognised Satanism". This is not the case.

I have made it very clear in the briefings I have given that I believe the articles of faith of the church of Satan to be incompatible with military service, even though its own website claims otherwise.

Moreover, unlike the great world religions, it does not simply have differences of opinion with those of other faiths, it is openly and actively hostile to them, stating in the clearest possible terms its opposition to everything for which (for example) the Christian Church stands.

The church of Satan's beliefs and hostility, to my mind, render it unimaginable that it could ever be accepted or recognised alongside the great faith groups of the world, and I could not personally countenance such recognition.

I hope that your readers and the whole naval community will be reassured a robust line is being taken on this matter.

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● *A fresh wreath on the grave of Capt Thomas Norman of HMS Mars who "suffered several weeks with incredible patience and fortitude" from severe wounds inflicted at Trafalgar*

Picture: Neill Rush, Gibraltar

The immortal memory remembered

THE recently-restored Trafalgar Cemetery was the fitting setting for commemorations in Gibraltar marking the 199th anniversary of the RN's most decisive victory.

Cdre David White, the senior Naval officer and Commander of British Forces on the Rock, joined Gibraltar's governor Sir Francis Richards, Chief Minister Peter Caruana, local dignitaries, and serving personnel for the Trafalgar Day ceremony.

Nelson's legendary prayer from the day of battle for a "great and glorious victory" and "humanity after victory" and Admiral's Collingwood's dispatch to the then governor of the colony were read out during proceedings at the burial ground which, despite its name, is the final resting place for only a handful of victims of the October 21 battle (the majority were buried at sea).

The cemetery just beyond Gibraltar's historic walls was restored by sailors based on the Rock, overseeing teenagers performing community service. The refurbishment was aided by £200 provided by the Friends of the Gibraltar Heritage Society.

Back in the UK, the village of Madron outside Penzance hosted personnel from RNAS Culdrose as it has done for nearly 60 years in marking Trafalgar.

The first news of the victory reached fishermen in Mounts Bay, who passed word of the triumph – and Nelson's death – to townsfolk.

The crowd who heard the news immediately headed for the Church of St Maddern at Madron where a memorial service was held and a banner prepared to mourn the admiral's death – "The immortal Nelson's gone, His last Sea fight is fought, his work of Glory done" – quickly produced.

A Trafalgar service was held at Madron annually for many years but eventually stopped until former RN captain and vicar of Madron Michael Hocking revived the service in 1946 and since then the Naval Air Station has provided personnel.

This year CO Capt Mike Knowles took the salute as HMS Seahawk's volunteer band led the parade of serving and former personnel, Sea Cadets, RM Cadets and the Royal British Legion.

At Nelson's tomb itself in St Paul's Cathedral, Rear Admiral James Rapp – in charge of planning commemorative events for the Trafalgar bicentennial – laid a wreath on behalf of the RN, assisted by Sea Cadet PO Elizabeth Surrey who placed a wreath for the Corps.

Also paying their respects at the ceremony in the capital were representatives of the City of London, the Pass the Port Association and the town of Nelson in New Zealand.

Illustrious sails Forth

BACK at sea after a two-year absence, aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious passed under the iconic Forth rail and road bridges to begin sea trials following a £120m overhaul.

There was a different appearance to 'Lusty' as she headed out into the North Sea leaving Rosyth behind for a month of tests, after months of work by an army of engineers, electricians and shipwrights from defence firm Babcock.

Beyond upgrading weapons and communications systems, revamping the accommodation areas (the 20,000-ton warship can now better serve as a helicopter/commando carrier if needed), a distinctive third mast has been added for communications. (The only other three master in today's Fleet is HMS Victory).

Sister ships HMS Ark Royal and Invincible have already gone through their major overhauls at Rosyth, allowing them to carry the Merlin helicopter into combat.

Besides now being 'fitted for Merlin', Illustrious has also had a new 'ski jump' ramp installed to allow her to launch not merely existing RAF and RN Harriers, but also the new GR9 model which enters service shortly.

"This is a great moment for all on board," said CO Capt Bob Cooling. "The ship's company is excited to be returning to sea after two years in upkeep. It's already clear they are ready to respond with the RN's characteristic enthusiasm and determination."

With initial trials over, the carrier is due back in Portsmouth this month before beginning her work-up.



● *Ready to do business in great waters once more: The new-look HMS Illustrious is ushered under the Forth Rail Bridge to begin sea trials*

Picture: LA(Phot) Brad Bradbury FRPU Clyde

Horst learns how he skewered a Skua

MORE than six decades after a chivalrous aerial duel with the Fleet Air Arm, a Luftwaffe pilot finally learned what brought down his enemy over Norwegian skies.

At the height of the Norwegian campaign of 1940 Horst Schopis' Heinkel He111 bomber was locked in a fight to the death with a FAA Blackburn Skua piloted by Royal Marine Capt R T Partridge.

In the ensuing tussle in the skies near the village of Grotli, the opposing aircraft scored hits on each other – hits grave enough to force both pilots to make an emergency landing, writes David Morris, curator of aircraft at the FAA Museum.

Sixty-four years after the crash, Herr Schopis returned to Grotli to meet the team who recovered the Blackburn's wreck – and see the damage caused by his crew on that fateful April day.

The remains of the Skua were recovered by an RN diving team lead by Lt Andrew Lindley in 1974.

Capt Partridge, who passed away in 1990, put his aircraft down on frozen Lake Heillistug, then with his observer Lt R Bostock RN torched the crippled Skua using his signal pistol to prevent the Blackburn falling into enemy hands.

Recent close examination of the remains of the aircraft revealed a bullet from the Heinkel had pierced the Skua's main oil pipe.

Photographs of the wreck were presented to Herr Schopis by Mr Morris in Grotli this year when the divers, Capt Partridge's son Simon and locals reunited to recall the events of 1940. Remarkably, the remnants of the He111 remain on the mountainside.

"Horst was astonished and pleased to finally know after all these years how he had shot the Skua down," said Mr Morris.

After crashing their respective aircraft, Capt Partridge and Herr Schopis had both sought shelter from the elements.

Towards nightfall, the Germans came upon a small hut and entered – only to find the Fleet Air Arm fliers already inside.

Mr Morris says what happened next was a fine act of chivalry.

"Capt Partridge offered his hand in friendship and Horst respected the gesture," he added. "Both agreed that their battle had been in the air and that survival rather than further conflict should be the common aim.

"That night they shared coffee and muesli found in the hut and handed themselves in to the Norwegian authorities the next day."

Herr Schopis became a PoW; Capt Partridge and Lt Bostock were returned to the UK with help from the Norwegian resistance.

The remains of the Skua and the bullet-holed oil pipe can be seen at the FAA Museum in Yeovilton.



● *A Norwegian ski patrol surveys the remains of Skua L2940 in April 1940 and (inset) Horst Schopis (left) inspects what is left of his He111 64 years after it was shot down*

Pictures: Fleet Air Arm Museum

A fresh look at the last resting place of a titan

THIS is a startling new look at one of the Royal Navy's most hallowed sites.

Lying upturned on the bed of the South China Sea in less than 200 feet of water is the former pride of the surface fleet, battleship HMS Prince of Wales.

This stunning image of the King George V class battleship was captured by survey ship HMS Echo during her Far East deployment.

The Devonport-based vessel swept over the resting place of Prince of Wales and her accompanying battle-cruiser HMS Repulse using her bathymetric sonar to produce surveys of the two capital ships for historians and experts back home to study.

The ships comprised the punch of Force Z, sent east in the autumn of 1941 by premier Winston Churchill to serve as a deterrent to Japanese aggression in the Far East.

The Japanese struck anyway and when they invaded Malaysia, Force Z was ordered to sortie to disrupt the enemy moves.

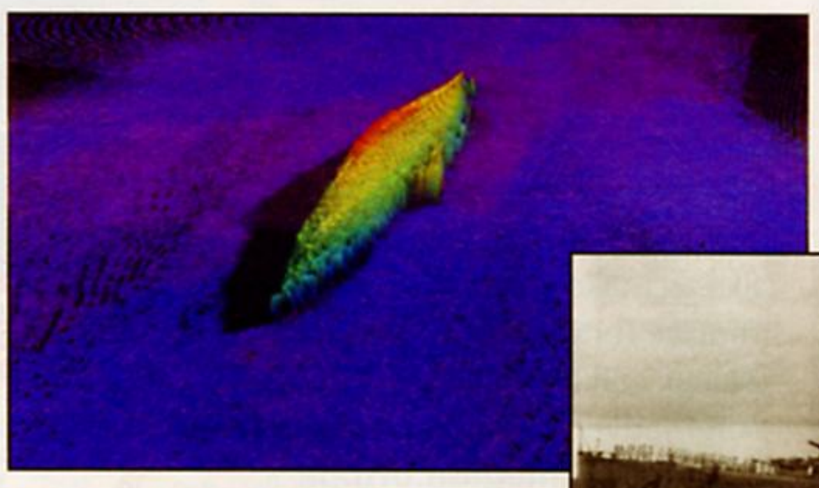
Instead, Prince of Wales and Repulse were sighted by Japanese bombers and attacked on December 10 1941.

In little more than two hours, both ships were sunk, taking 840 men with them, including Force Z commander Admiral Tom Phillips.

"The surveys yielded images of previously unheralded clarity," said Echo's Commanding Officer Cdr Andy Waddington, "and were a poignant reminder for all aboard of the sacrifices made by previous generations of Royal Navy sailors."

Beyond surveying the wreck sites, Echo served as a command platform for mine counter-measures units during recent exercises with Malay, Singaporean, Australian and New Zealand Naval forces.

After a maintenance period in Singapore, Echo re-crossed the Bay of Bengal and headed for the northern Arabian Gulf where the bulk of her survey work has been carried out since she departed Devonport at the beginning of the year.





● *The end of Force Z: HMS Prince of Wales as she appears today thanks to the scanners of HMS Echo's sonar and (right) as she appeared in her brief career under the White Ensign in 1941*

Turn on, tune in, print out

THE internet pages of the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth have been given a much-needed revamp ahead of Trafalgar 200 commemorations.

The museum's president, the Princess Royal, performed the honours at its annual general meeting, unveiling the much more comprehensive website.

The overhauled pages feature greater detail on the extensive collections the museum holds, both for visitors and for serious researchers.

Among the changes introduced to the website – *www.royalnavalmuseum.org* – is enhanced information on the Navy of Nelson, HMS Victory and Trafalgar, details on photographs, manuscripts and paintings in the museum archives. Soon to be uploaded are fact sheets on subjects as diverse as the Bismarck chase and ship's biscuits.

Another addition is the 'monthly pick' by curator of manuscripts Matthew Sheldon. November opened with the diary of Paymaster-in-Chief Henry Hardy Priest Shanks from the Crimean war; in December, internet buffs will fittingly be able to learn how the RN has celebrated Christmas through the ages.

Younger web users are also encouraged to dip into the world of the Senior Service, learning how to spell their names in signal flags.

Duke is hauled over for fresh duties

BURIED beneath scaffolding and tarpaulin, frigate HMS Northumberland bears little resemblance to the ship which 12 months ago was star attraction at the London Boat Show.

Work has begun upgrading the 10-year-old warship for continued duties under the White Ensign to make her the most advanced Type 23 warship in the frigate fleet.

Northumberland is the second of the Duke class ships to undergo the overhaul (HMS Westminster, has just completed her refit, also at Rosyth) as engineers from Babcock fit the new 2087 sonar, among other improvements.

The revamp will also see weapons systems given a 21st century overhaul with a new 4.5in gun installed, living quarters will be improved, and all four diesel engines have been torn out and are being serviced in Babcock's shore-side workshops.

In refit, the usual ship's company of nearly 200 has been whittled down to just 30, but they have not been forgotten about by their home port.

Rev Tommy Goodwin, chaplain with Commodore Devonport Flotilla, headed north to meet the skeleton crew and pose for the obligatory picture beneath Northumberland's bow.

To PC or not to PC

THE Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton is hosting a computer sale of PCs and peripherals on Sunday December 12. Entrance fee £1. Details on 01935 842637.

To the ends of the earth

ROYAL Marines, sailors and cadets will assault the two remotest points on the globe as they embark on a unique challenge to the ends of the earth.

Naval parties will head for both the North and South Poles in the summer and autumn of 2006 – and with the trip south they intend to enter the history books.

Green beret Capt Jim Bonney aims to be the first amputee to reach the southernmost point on the earth as part of a seven-strong team setting off across the snow and ice in November 2006.

Capt Bonney has already made Corps history as the first one-legged commando allowed to continue front-line duties. He chose to lose his lower right leg following a climbing accident in favour of an artificial limb to continue in the career he loved.

One of the Royals' most experienced adventurers and polar explorers, Capt Sean Chapple is leading both expeditions. He was in charge of the marines' attempt to reach the North Pole in 1998 which had to be aborted when vital equipment failed.

Capt Chapple will lead an eight-strong party, including two Naval Cadets, on a 250-mile unsupported ski to the North Pole in the April of 2006.

The Arctic trip is aimed at novices – the team will be picked up by aircraft once they reach their destination.

The November adventure is on a different scale altogether. It will take around 50 days to ski to the South Pole across more than 500 miles of the frozen continent.

The team intends to locate the spot where Capt Scott raised the Union Flag in the doomed 1912 expedition and hold a memorial service to all sailors and Royal Marines who have set out on Polar exploration.

Throughout the expeditions, codenamed Polar Quest, satellite and internet links will allow schools and colleges back in Britain – and around the globe – to follow the adventurers' progress and learn about the frozen wastes.

More details on the expedition can be found on the internet at *www.polarquest.co.uk*

In pod we trust

HI-TECH surveillance kit is being tested with the Fleet Air Arm's Merlin helicopters in a bid to find and track some of the smallest targets on the seas.

A sophisticated electro-optics and infra-red (EO/IR) 'pod' has been fitted to the submarine hunter to provide aircrew with unparalleled images of targets which the helicopter's existing sensors may struggle to find.

The all-weather sensors provide high-resolution images by day and night, and are particularly adept at finding small targets such as 'go-fasts' used by drug smugglers or potential suicide bombers.

The pod has been provided by defence firm Lockheed Martin in Havant, Hampshire.

The firm's Integrated Systems division originally oversaw the massive project to equip Merlin with its flight and communications systems.

It has provided the pod in the hope that the Navy is impressed enough to buy more.

The equipment slots into one of the Merlin's existing weapon carriage pylons and has been trialled by 829 NAS working with HMS Monmouth in the Caribbean.

The pod has now been transferred to the Merlin training squadron, 700M for further evaluation.

Flt Lt Jon Everitt

A REPORT of 771 NAS aircrew rewarded for their bravery by the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators in last month's edition omitted the name of RAF pilot Flt Lt Jon Everitt in Sea King Rescue 193 (*Fliers' Skill Rewarded*, p16). His name was omitted from the guild's citation submitted to *Navy News*.



● *Std Jordan Taylor urges Sunny to behave ahead of the Queen's visit to the ship earlier this year*

Guess who's back

TYPE 23 frigate HMS Lancaster must be gearing up for sea again... her popular mascot is ready to rejoin.

The ship has spent six months in Devonport undergoing an overhaul, minus the parrot which keeps the Portsmouth-based Lancaster regularly in the public eye.

The mascot, sponsored by the *Sun* newspaper (hence the name), has been looked after by crew ashore during the lay-up.

Home to the parrot is normally a cage in the ward room, where she adds colour (in every sense of the word) to the officers' lives.

As for the ship, Lancaster has been dry-docked, undergone mechanical, electrical and engineering overhauls and received systems upgrades ahead of what promises to be a busy 2005.

Operational Sea Training in the Channel is lined up for the frigate, whose sponsor is the Duke of Lancaster, the Queen, in the New Year.

Once OST is completed, Lancaster is due to be one of the Royal Navy's attendees at the International Festival of the Sea in Portsmouth from June 30-July 3, before the ship heads off on deployment to the Mediterranean.

Sailors have continued the ship's affiliations during refit, including rebuilding a playground/garden at College Park Infant School in Portsmouth, and partaking in adventurous and sporting activities.

"For all on board, the past six months have been busy and the crew are ready now to undertake the challenges ahead," said Commanding Officer Cdr James Morley.

"Importantly, Sunny the parrot is returning and with her arrival we will be fully crewed up and ready to return to sea."

Autumn glow for final Sea Harriers

THE fabled Sea Harrier may be in the twilight of its Royal Navy career, but that doesn't mean the jump jet is going out quietly, as a busy autumn has demonstrated.

The jets of 801 Naval Air Squadron have twice embarked upon Fleet flagship HMS Invincible towards the close of 2004 for exercises in the North and Mediterranean Seas.

With the disbanding of 800 NAS earlier this year, 801 – motto *On les aura* ('We'll get them') – is Britain's last operational Sea Harrier squadron.

The Yeovilton-based unit was joined aboard 'Vince' initially by the RAF's variant of the Harrier, the GR7, from IV(AC) Squadron.

The two-week exercise, dubbed Hold Fast, was the first experience of operations at sea by the RAF formation – which meant a fairly steep learning curve as its personnel got used to deck launches and landings and life in general aboard a 20,000-ton warship.

Operating in the North Sea allowed the carrier-based Harriers to operate with their counterparts based on land at RAFs Wittering and Cottesmore in airspace segregated from commercial traffic.

The east coast ranges also provided 801 with an excellent opportunity to practise electronic warfare, air defence and air combat maneouvres (or dogfights in common parlance) and dropping 1,000lb bombs at Cape Wrath in Scotland.

All the RAF crew left Hold Fast with the necessary qualifications for carrier operations, while one of 801's fliers earned his Initial Night Qualification – the first of two significant milestones in a Sea Harrier pilot's career. INQ recognises a pilot's ability to land and take off from a carrier at night; the next step, a full qualification, takes a flier to the next level with air defence and air-to-air refueling techniques mastered.

After two weeks in the North Sea, 801 departed Invincible briefly before rejoining her for another fortnight in the Mediterranean for NATO exercise Destined Glory (a mock invasion of Sardinia, as featured in last month's *Navy News*).

The work-up Hold Fast provided served as an excellent warm-up for the Med as the Harriers fought alongside and 'against' some of the less-familiar aircraft in the NATO arsenal.

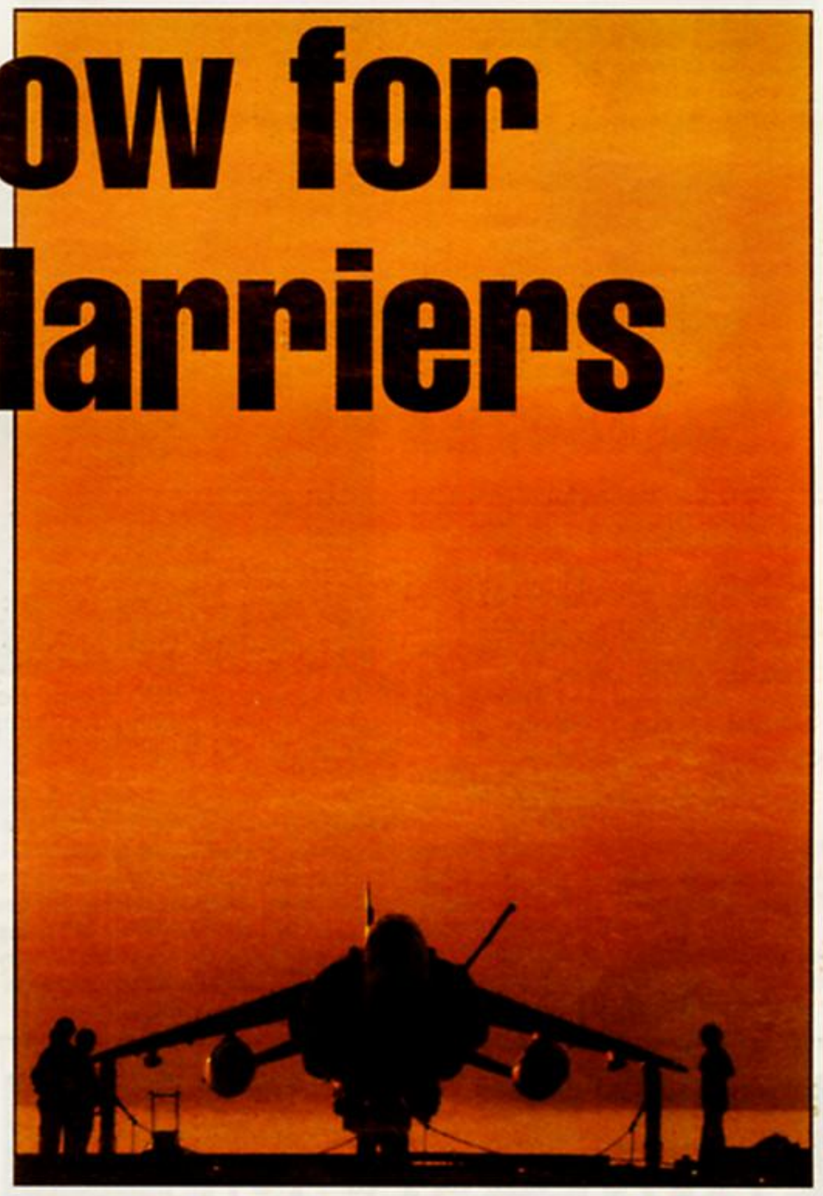
Operating between Sardinia and mainland Italy, aircraft serviceability and weather conditions were excellent, allowing all pilots to gain some excellent experience in complex missions and scenarios.

Destined Glory proved to be the swansong of the Harrier career of 801 NAS's CO Cdr Paul Stone, whose 15 years of flight have also seen him pilot the prototype of the jump jet's replacement, the Joint Strike Fighter.

Beyond a formal handover of the squadron to Cdr Tony Rae, Cdr Stone was lashed to the flight deck and given a wet send-off by all 801 personnel.

Invincible, accompanied by destroyers HMS Manchester and Southampton, plus Type 23 frigate HMS Kent, headed the amphibious task force during Destined Glory, which was the first major test for NATO's new Response Force.

Aside from the business end of leading units from 11 NATO nations, the carrier paid a high-profile visit to Barcelona.





● *Red sky at night, Harrier pilot's delight: (Top) An FA2 prepares to take off set against a brilliant sunset and (above) lashings of fun: outgoing CO Cdr Paul Stone receives a traditional send-off strapped to Invincible's flight deck*

Pictures: LA(Phot) 'Billy' Bunting

Aircrew take the plunge off Normandy

THE hallowed ground, or rather seabed, of Normandy was the destination for the annual expedition by the Naval Air Command's diving buffs.

A team of 12 sub aqua enthusiasts from RNAS Culdrose and Yeovilton made the trip across the Channel to study wrecks in the Seine Bay.

The airmen managed 120 dives, totalling 4,098 minutes, allowing them to inspect eight wrecks which were in various states of decay, according to Lt Cdr Geoff Bowker.

"All of the wrecks were fascinating in their own right – and being war graves were afforded the appropriate respect at all times," he added.

"The wrecks, which varied from almost complete ships to piles of metal plates and girders, now provide natural havens. At times the wreckage could not be seen for the shoals of fish."

The two most poignant vessels visited by the divers were LST 523, complete with its Sherman tanks which were destined for Omaha Beach – but never got there – and the SS Leopoldville.

The 11,500-tonne troopship was sunk by Oberleutnant Gerhard Meyer and his U486 on Christmas Eve 1944, taking more than 800 US soldiers down with her.

Her wreck lies in around 50m of water, at the diving limits allowed by the Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Regulations, and also requires a special permit from the French authorities.

The expedition closed with a wreath laid over the Leopoldville wreck and a memorial service to Allied servicemen lost in this part of the Channel.

The findings of the aircrews' dives on the wrecks has been passed on to the UK Hydrographic Office for it to update its records.



● *And what are you looking at? CPO Steve 'Jacko' Jackson in the Seine Bay*

A positive start to life in the ranks

THE initial training establishments which turn civilians into sailors and Royal Marines have received a positive 'healthcheck' from inspectors.

A team of four officers visited initial training establishments across the three Services, including CTCRM in Lympstone, HMS Raleigh at Torpoint and the RN engineering school HMS Sultan in Gosport to see what progress had been made in both training and looking after new additions to the ranks.

The inspectors spoke to or received questionnaires from 584 sailor and marine trainees, plus 55 instructors – and were generally impressed by the level of training and support.

Common themes affecting recruits include homesickness, the initial shock of military life and problems of personal relationships.

The team says it found no evidence of systematic bullying; rather, recruits often found the training regime less restrictive and harsh than they had expected. Three out of four trainees believe they will still be in the Forces in a decade's time.

CTCRM is praised for the spiritual and moral support recruits are offered, as well as impressive physiotherapy facilities to help injured trainees.

The officers found trainee engineers at Sultan were unhappy at committing to eight years' service before they had spent any meaningful time at sea.

And the team found instances in some military establishments of recruits who had failed mandated tests but were passed on to the next phase of training or even the front line.

Among changes the inspectors would like to see are a 'fourth meal' at around 9pm – already provided at Lympstone.

"Considerable progress has been made in the initial training regime," the report concludes. "The majority of recruits we interviewed were positive about their future in the Armed Forces.

"The training was exemplified by the quote of one recruit at Lympstone: 'If I achieve nothing else with my life, at least I will be able to say that I was a Royal Marine.'"

MOD shelves project

A NEW archive to hold official military documents will serve the Forces for the next 25 years.

The flagship £11m archive centre at Swadlincote in Derbyshire will collect documents from the MOD and 10 other government departments, including the Metropolitan Police, and hold them for safe storage – with the ability for fast retrieval.

The archive, run by TNT, is designed to house 13 million documents which will accrue over the next quarter of a century, stored in 400 kilometres – 250 miles – of shelving, protected by the latest fire detection and prevention systems.

The complex takes over the existing MOD document archive in Hayes in Middlesex, where records are being transferred from to the new facility.

Ceremonial squad pioneer banana-powered drill

LONG hours of square-bashing and ceremonial practice have gone smoothly at Whale Island – thanks to the judicious use of bananas.

The athlete's fuel of choice was taken on board by the Royal Navy to ensure that everything went according to plan at the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in London, and at the Lord Mayor's Show and the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall.

The precision drill and marching by the Navy contingent of around 100 was nurtured over a three-week period at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth, and represented a major commitment by a group of volunteers and 'pressed' sailors and officers from across the Naval Service, including the RFA and Naval nurses.

And those three weeks were tough – though it was freely acknowledged that the hardships of these sailors was nothing compared to those who fought and died for their country.

"We have got 90 sailors, plus six senior rates and three officers," said CPO 'Blood' Read, the Chief of the Parade.

"They are from many ships and submarines and air stations – it's a real cross-section of the Navy."

Around a fifth are volunteers, the rest are detailed – but to most it is a new experience, and not always a pleasant one at that.

"Some of these people have not done this kind of basic drill for ten or fifteen years," said CPO Read.

"They start three weeks before Remembrance Day, and we start right from basics – basic foot drill then on to rifle drill."

The first week concentrates on the Cenotaph, then the group is split into two for tailored training depending on their other duty.

One set will march around the island six abreast, the other will practice marching down stairs in step – a necessity at the Albert Hall.

Instructors admit it is a bit like Groundhog Day; work starts at 8am with dress inspections, sick parade and singing – the sailors sing *Oh God Our Help in Ages Past* and the National Anthem, and recite the Lord's Prayer, having learned them all by heart.

Then it is on to drill – and at around this point the banana comes into its own.

WO Bob Bainbridge, Ceremonial Training Officer, was not convinced that the tradition of previous years – the distribution of chocolate bars – was helping with a tricky part of the day's activities, the stand-still.

Standing still may not sound too taxing, but to anyone who knows how windswept and cold Whale Island – or even Whitehall – can get, it is a feat of mind over matter.

"They have to stand still for two hours on the day, so we have to train them for it," said CPO Read.

"On Day One they stand for about 30 minutes, and by the third week they are up to the full two hours.

"They have to stand perfectly still, with occasional attentions for the arrival of the Queen, the Two Minutes Silence and National Anthem.



● *Get some in! CPO 'Blood' Read suggests OM(AW) Craig Clarke, of HMS Newcastle, takes his daily banana while training for Remembrance ceremonies in London*

Picture: LA(PHOT) Nicola Harper

"And they are holding a 9lb weapon in their arm at the same time.

"And remember that the week before these people came here they were doing things like fixing engines in a ship, and they will be fixing engines again the week after – they are not hardened ceremonial personnel like the Army has."

WO Bainbridge said: "I always review how we train our people and how we can do it better.

"I felt we had improved our instructional techniques as far as we could, but there were other directions we could go."

Reasoning that if bananas helped sports stars endure a gruelling session, it should work for sailors – and it appears to have paid off.

"We have not seen the level of fainting and collapsing and blackouts that we have in the past," added WO Bainbridge.

He believes the combination of a hearty breakfast, and a healthy banana – local importer Fyffes were happy to oblige with boxes of the fruit – shortly before the stand-still, may have done the trick.

Bananas are recommended as a nutritional fillip taken 30 minutes before exercise in the MOD Commanders' Guide from QinetiQ.

The ceremonial party was in good hands, with a wealth of experience in the instructing staff.

WO Bainbridge has been doing the job for 15 years, in between sea time, while CPO Read and Chief Instructor CPO Si Cox – both veterans of the Bournemouth Sea Cadets – combine steely authority and an edge of humour to keep morale high.

But CPO Read said it was important to keep things in perspective.

"What they are doing there for two hours some bloke gave his life for," he said.

"So to stand there for two hours doesn't really hurt that much."

Nation stops to honour sacrifice

CONTINGENTS of sailors and Royal Marines, as well as thousands of veterans of the Naval Service, joined members of the Royal Family and the Government in London to honour those who died fighting for freedom around the world.

The Queen led tributes to Britain's war dead at the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph.

The Queen was joined by Prince William and Prime Minister Tony Blair, who watched around 9,000 veterans parade along Whitehall.

More than 1,000 civilians were also involved in the ceremonies.

The Prince of Wales laid a poppy wreath, along with the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Duke of York, the Princess Royal and the Duke of Kent.

Mr Blair and other political leaders also laid wreaths, followed by Commonwealth High Commissioners and top military officers.

When all the wreaths had been laid, there was a short service conducted by Bishop of London, Richard Chartres.

The Princess Royal, as Rear Admiral Chief Commandant for Women in the Royal Navy, took the salute at Horse Guards of the columns of ex-Servicemen and women marched past.

Similar services took place at Naval establishments around the country and abroad, on deployed ships and at units on exercise (see page 4).

Other sites of significance to the military, such as the Commando Monument at Spean Bridge in Scotland, also staged simple but moving ceremonies.



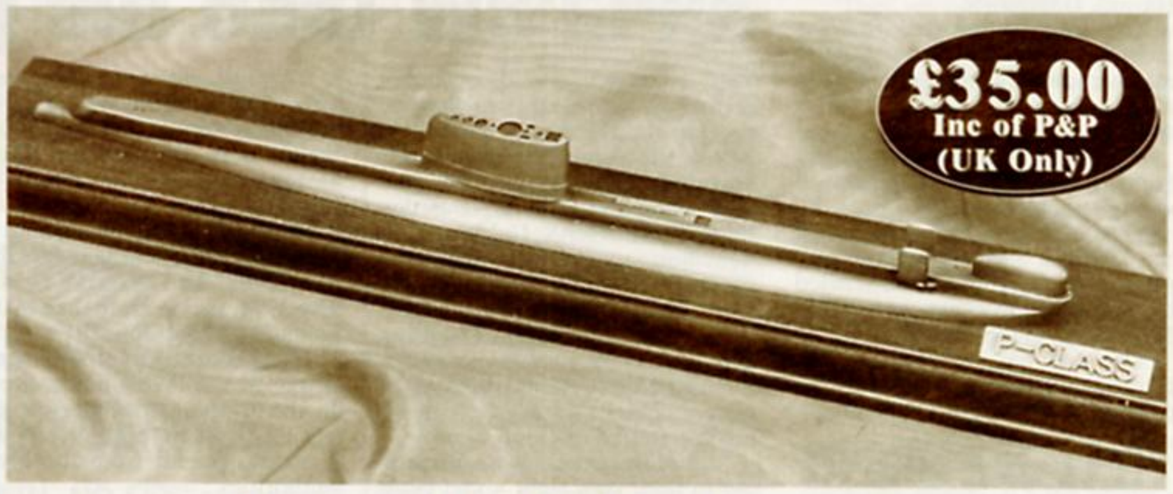
● *Sailors in HMS Southampton paused to remember the 81 men of the wartime cruiser of the same name which was attacked and fatally damaged in the Mediterranean in January 1941. The current Southampton, a Type 42 destroyer, is serving with NATO ships in the Eastern Mediterranean.*

Picture: CPO(PHOT) Dave Coombs



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Calling all associations: Here at *Navy News* we are keen to make sure that all our association details are up to date so that we can offer the best service to our readers. Please could you send either a letter or an email to us with all your association details: contact names; telephone numbers; email addresses; or websites. In addition, we intend to offer a detailed directory on our website *Navy News Online*, so please let us know which, if any, of your association details can be made available online. Details must be received in writing to: Association Directory, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH or email: *edit@navynews.co.uk*

Reunions

Series 24, Artificer Apprentices joined May 1955: A 50th Anniversary celebration is being planned to take place in 2005 to mark joining the Royal Navy. To register an interest and be updated with developments please contact either Graham McKay on 01767 313273 or Sam Smart on 01329 230757. Should you know of any ex-Series 24 Apprentices please pass the information of the Reunion.

January 2005

TS Exeter (formerly TS Eagle), Exeter Sea Cadet Unit: are having a reunion of former cadets/staff on January 21. The event will be held at the current unit on Haven Road, Exeter. For details please contact Alison Styles (née Flack) on 01392 252968 or 07973 577114.

February 2005

HMS Phoebe: A reunion for the stokers mess of HMS Phoebe from 1983-1990 is to be held in Plymouth February 25-27. Contact Wilf Pickles on 07967 610723 or email: *firemanpick@aol.com*. This has nothing to do with any of the affiliated clubs.

March 2005

Federation of Naval Associations: AGM reunion on Hayling Island from March 11-14. One pence, yes, one pence per pint/shot at the bar all weekend at £95 per person for the three nights. Associations welcome to hold their own gatherings within the weekend with all of the work being done by the FNA. Details from Robbie Robson on tel: 0191 5847058 or email: *robbiefna1@ntlworld.com*.

HMS Brilliant (80-84): 1st Commission and Falklands reunion from March 11-13 at the Belgrave Hotel, Torquay. Contact Reg Briers on 01337 842580 or visit the website: *www.hmsbrilliant.com*.

Submarine Coxswain's Association: Family weekend at Lincoln, March 11-13. Enquiries to Andy Verdi on 01329 237505 or see the website: *http://www.coxn.co.uk*.

Royal Naval Engineroom Association: Annual dinner March 18, Annual reunion May 21. Details from Bob Styants on 0121 422 4115 or email: *bobstyants@btopenworld.com*.

899 Naval Air Squadron: After forming in 1942, 899 NAS will disband forever in March 2005 and a reunion Gala evening and charity fundraiser will be held in the Fleet Air Arm Museum at RNAS Yeovilton on March 23. All ex-squadron members are invited. For further details visit the squadron website at *www.899squadron.co.uk* or contact the squadron PR Officer on 01935 456994.

April 2005

HMS Loch Fada 1944-67: Your shipmates are looking for you! The 8th reunion will take place at King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent from April 1-4. Get in touch with Bob Harris on 023 8039 1848 or email *bobharris1390@supanet.com*.

HMS Ladybird (Sasebo, Japan 1950-53) Association: will be holding their annual reunion April 8-10 at the Savoy Hotel, Bournemouth. Further details from Terry Cooper (Hon Sec)on tel: 01904 425883 or email: *TERRYCOOPER7@aol.com*.

HMS Duke of York: Mini reunion in Blackpool, April 15-17. Contact R. Draper on tel: 01928 725175.

HMS Kenya Association: will be holding their mini reunion in Llandudno, April 15-18. Details and membership from Chas Atkinson on 023 9229 6404.

HMS Cavalier Association: Annual reunion will take place from April 29 to May 2 at the County Hotel, Llandudno. For full details contact Vice Chairman, Terry Bowser on tel: 01449 767731 or email: *tbowser@tiscali.co.uk*.

May 2005

Algerines Association (Fleet Minesweepers) 1942-62: Reunion at Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool, May 12-16. Prospective new members who served on Algerine class minesweepers, contact George Patience on tel: 01456 450659.

HMS Forester Reunion: takes place at the St Ives Hotel, Lytham St Annes, from May 23 for four nights. Contact D. Headford on 01226 740637.

HMS Exeter 1982 onwards: Reunion in Portsmouth on May 28, venue yet to be arranged. Please contact Reg Cornall on 0161 304 7496 or email: *reginald.cornall@btinternet.com*.

June 2005

Submarine Coxswain's Association: Reunion and AGM at HMS Raleigh, June 2-5. Enquiries to Andy Verdi on 01329 237505 or see the website: *http://www.coxn.co.uk*.

July 2005

HMS Hampshire (D06): Reunion July 9-10 at the Nautical Club in Birmingham. All interested parties both old and new please contact Ray Crawford on tel: 01606 77648 or mob: 07971 563503 or email: *ray@crawford1956.freeserve.co.uk*.

September 2005

HMS Duke of York: 60th Anniversary reunion of the Japanese Surrender in Tokyo Bay, September 2, 1945. It will be held in Portsmouth during Sept or Oct. Contact R. Draper on tel: 01928 725175.

HMS Glasgow Association: The association will be carrying on even when the present HMS Glasgow pays off for disposal. All former crew are welcome to join the Association and continue the comradeship enjoyed onboard. The 26th reunion will take place at the NAAFI Club, Gillingham, September 9-12. Contact Allan Mercer on tel: 0121 5102445.

October 2005

HMS Jupiter Association: Reunion in Plymouth October 7-9. Contact Ken 'Bungy' Williams on 01743 341439 or email: *ken@shacks.wanadoo.co.uk*.

CCTs: After the last uproarious success in Selsey, it is proposed to hold another in 2006. Date and venue to be confirmed. Interested parties to contact Peter Jackson, tel: 01697 361648 or email: *jackson@oakdene18.fsnet.co.uk*.

Over to You

Navy News **needs your help!:** We would like to hear from anyone who has back issues of *Navy News* from February 1988, November 1989, March, April and May 1990. If you can help, please contact Michael Beeby on 023 9282 6040.

Cdr Wilfrid Briggs: Engineer Sheerness 1908-14, Admiralty 1914-18, Head of Naval Aviation Engines, seconded to RAF, retired 1920 – in 1909 was motivator, director and secretary of Sheerness Golf Club Ltd. The Navy built golf courses at its principal Naval ports around the world. Sheerness Golf Club has its centenary in 2009 and would like to contact the Briggs family in connection with the celebrations. Contact G.G. Holt on 01903 243949 or email: *holtgeosop@freeserve.co.uk*.

James 'Tiny' Little: Served in RYB 1975-78. Godfather to Beverley Constance Notton, christened April 4, 1976 at HMS Excellent. Her father Eric Ronald Notton served with Tiny in the RYB. Contact Mrs S. Mansell on 07904 062059.

HMS Illustrious, WWII: Seeking information about Arthur Maximillian Dennis, FAA Pilot, flying Swordfish and Barracudas from Illustrious. He came from Nailsea near Bristol. He may remember being taught to ride whilst on leave in Ilfracombe. Contact Ann Lovell on 01409 241243.

HMS Dorsetshire: Seeking information about Frank Frankland Maud who joined the RN on March 23, 1937, first serving in HMS St Vincent, Gosport and then on the cruiser, Dorsetshire and involved in the sinking of the Bismarck. He was one of the survivors from the Dorsetshire sinking. He lived in Victor Street, Caldmore and went to the Blue Coat School, Walsall. If you have any information contact Ms Ann Taylor, 'Doone', 60 Cross Road, Albrighton, Wolverhampton. WV73QT.

Subic Bay, Phillipines: David Dorsey was a US Navy Fireman/Electrician 1st class in USS Orvetta in 1946. One night he and a shipmate missed their liberty boat and were offered a lift by a bearded Chief Cox'n; he dropped his party off first but then they could not find their ship, so he took them to his ship, ordered them steak and eggs from the galley, and let them sleep in his work area. David and his pal gave everyone a laugh the next morning when he poured condensed milk into his tea – the US version is liquid, whilst the British version is thick and had to be spooned from the tin. They caught the mailboat back to the dock then back to their ship. David cannot remember the name of the chief or the ship, however it was a frigate and the Captain was a short man and affectionately known as 'Eddie Cantor' due to his similar looks to the singer. If anyone remembers the incident could they contact David W. Dorsey Senior, 606 N 8th Street, Opelika, Al, 36801-4020, USA or email: *ddorsey@mindspring.com*.

Crete Evacuations 1941: Seeking anyone who has knowledge or photos of Mike Cumberlege or James Steele, who operated a caique and transported many servicemen off the island following the general evacuation. Contact Alan Harris, PO Box 594, Kwelera, 5259, South Africa.

HMT Damito: Seeking information regarding Thomas William Cole who was killed off Portland Harbour on July 13, 1940. If anyone served with him and has photographs or memories of him could they contact his grandson, Steve at 9 Andrew Way, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 8PY.

HMS Drake: David Charles 'Shep' Shepherd, born November 1960. Submariner officer based in Drake until leaving the RN around 1999. Does anyone know how to get in touch with him? If so please contact Linda and Ashley in Plymouth, as they would love to see him again. Tel: 07790 023967 or email: *lindylou492@yahoo.co.uk*.

HMS Firedrake: Seeking information and photos about Edward Stockbridge, Stoker, lost in action, December 1942. Would any stoker who knew Edward or his relatives, contact his son, M. Stockbridge, on 01795 661451.

HMS Grimsby: Patrick Doyle was a Leading Stoker in HMS Grimsby when she was sunk off Tobruk on May 25, 1941. He survived the sinking of Grimsby and the war, although he never spoke of his experiences. Naval Records Branch have no records of his postings after the sinking, although it's known he served in HMS Hawkins, Rosemary and Aphis. It seems Grimsby, along with HMSAS Southern Maid, was escorting the SS Helka from Alexandria to Tobruk, and during an attack both Grimsby and Helka were sunk. Any information on the sinking, the rescue and details of what happened next would be welcome – also on Surg Lt B. Cranshaw, RNVR (possibly Australian), given the DSC 'for bravery and devotion to duty when HMS Grimsby was lost'. Contact Mike Doyle on tel: 01908 692619.

HMML 1323: Does anyone know what happened to the Chapel windows from 'Tamar' on the handover to mainland China? in particular the panel dedicated to the memory of the dead from HMML 1323, sadly shot up in the Pearl River incident. Contact Spike Wheeler, 8a Holmes Crescent, Wokingham, Berkshire. RG41 2SD.

James Carrington Bond: Trying to contact him on behalf of the wife of Mike E. Roberts – she would love to put the two of them back in touch after 30 years, in time for Mike's 60th birthday. James lived in the Hull area, and met and married a girl from there. After leaving the Navy at the same time, he and Mike went into the building renovation business together in Hull but when the business closed they lost contact after going their separate ways doing diving contracts. Anybody with any information, contact: Helen Matthew, 40 Viola Road, Bloubergrant, 7441, Cape Town, South Africa or email: *helen@violacottage.co.za*.

Cdr Gervase 'Gerry' Milward: His widow, Joanna, would like to hear from anyone who knew her husband. During WWII he had two destroyers sunk under his feet whilst serving as Signals Officer. The first was HMS Grenville in January 1940 and the other was HMS Codrington in July 1940. If you were a member of the crews, please contact Joanna Milward, c/o Exeter White Ensign Club, 16 Mount Dinham, Exeter, Devon, EX4 4EB or Richard Holloway on 01392 411487.

Malcolm Victor Mercer: Seeking information about Malcolm who was in the Navy from 1943-46 on minesweepers. When he came out of the Navy he may have taken up Holy Orders. Contact Mrs June M. Davies, 10 Four Horseshoes Park, Seasalter Road, Graveney, Faversham, Kent, ME13 9DE.

Royal Naval Division 1914-18: R. Wainwright's grandfather was in 1918 the senior officer alive in Hawke Battalion at the moment before his death. His grandfather lost his life "in attempting to rush an enemy machine-gun post". Next year the town of Grevillers, near Bapaume, France, will be erecting a stone to his memory. If any of your relations were in the RND and you feel you may have any information of interest on the RND's time in Greece and France during WWI, please contact Mr Wainwright on tel: 01452 502770 or email: *wainwright.trainingmanagement@virgin.net*.

Simonstown: William Ward is trying to find a long lost Navy pal – name of Chris Meickle. He stopped over in Cape Town (Simonstown) about 34 years ago. If anybody knows of his whereabouts, please contact William at PO Box 3794, Durbanville, Cape Town, South Africa or via his daughter's email: *wendy@cks.co.za*.

HMS Spey 1942-3: Craig Moore's father, George, served in her; he has some information on Convoy OS33 but would like more; also on the North African landings as thinks his father was there at the time – he used to talk of the hail of bombs and if it was not for the skill of the captain they would have not survived. He thinks she was a lend-lease ship, possibly based at HMS Ferret, Londonderry, and wants to know if his father brought her over from the USA. Prior to that he had 12 months at HMS Excellent, after 2 years on Ramillies. Does anyone have any memories of HMS Asbury in the US? He would also like to hear from HMS Albion ship's company (1964-6) when George was MAA mess man. Contact Craig Moore, 12 Ravenscliffe Road, Calverley, Leeds, LS28 5RZ or email: *Craig@moore5296.fsnet.co.uk*.

HMS Theseus 1950-1: Seeking Eric Morgan, the best man of Eric ('Steve') and Barbara Stephens who were married at St Michael and All Angels Church, Lambourn in 1951. The two Erics served together in Theseus. Contact Mrs Barbara Stephens, 175 Marlborough Road, Swindon, SN3 1NL.

HMS Warrior II: Seeking details of this requisitioned yacht of 1,266 tons, built in 1904, and lost off Portland on July 11, 1940. Any information to Dave Wright, 45 Orchard Way, Burwell, Cambridge, CB5 0EQ.

WWI Japanese destroyer flotillas: Anybody with recollections of family experiences with Japanese destroyer flotillas in Mediterranean between 1917-18 on Convoy escort duties with RN, ranging from Commander to Ordinary Seamen (including Japanese Medal recipients) and family correspondence etc, please contact George Karger on tel: 020 7580 2707.

Royal Naval Yachts: Seeking information and photographs of the following yachts used or operated by the RN: Larvik (1920), Galahad (1963), Gauntlet (1937), Gawaine (1962) and Merlin. Contact Ron Bond on tel: 0151 924 5378 or email: *ronnie76@btopenworld.com*.

HMS Yarmouth F101: Seeking all old shipmates who served in HMS Yarmouth at any time. Presently there are 256 members of the Association, and at the last reunion 140 were present. Admission to the Association is free. Also seeking photographs, press cuttings or documents relating to HMS Yarmouth to be included on the website. Contact Dusty Miller on 01709 532792 or email: *dusty@hms-yarmouth.com* or see the website at *www.hms-yarmouth.com*.

HMS Lady Stanley: Arthur Spurrell of Newfoundland, Canada, is looking for photos of converted trawler HMS Lady Stanley that operated from Grimsby on minespotting duties in 1941-42; also photos of his other ships Kilkenzie or Quail. Arthur can be contacted through Alan Waite of the HMS Newfoundland Association at 23 Seaford Road, Aylestone, Leicester LE2 8SQ or email: *alan_waitec59@hotmail.com*.

Naval Estate, St Budeaux, Plymouth 1960s-70s: Mrs J. Webber's late husband, Ken Webber, took photographs of children of Naval personnel in the late 60s and 70s on the Naval Estate at St Budeaux. The photos are numbered and she will pass them on to those involved. Tel: 01752 893231.

Calling Old Shipmates

HMS Berwick: Seeking information about Lt Cdr Peter Swan. Served in Barbados 1970-1972 as XO/CO USNavFac when last in touch with Lt Cdr Peter Swan, RN, in HMS Berwick. Would like to renew friendship. Contact Cdr C.S. 'Chuck' Farmer USN (ret), 847 Laura Street, Fernandina Beach, Florida, 32034, USA or email: *Divefly@aol.com*.

HMS Cardigan Bay: Seeking shipmates from 1954-56 commission. Sam 'Mick' Millar was the Butcher onboard, the Swain's name was Mick Burns, the Skipper was Captain Nigel Patrick Pumphries DSC DSO. Sam is living in Geelong, Australia, and would love to hear from you. He also served in Indefatigable, HMML2221, Orestes, Wave and Tenby, and Gunnery course at HMS Cambridge. Contact Sam Millar, 5a Spring Street, Belmont 3216, Victoria, Australia.

Mike Doughty 'The Duke': Served HMS Centaur 1957-60, Russell 1962-64, Meon 1966-7 and at various times in Sultan. He would like to hear from anyone who remembers him. Contact Mike Doughty on tel: 01483 722065 or email: *mikedoughty.dslw@oneteldsl5.net*.

HMS Constance: Did anyone serve in this most illustrious Destroyer between 1945 and 1956. A reunion is to be held in May 2005. Please contact Ernie Balderson on tel: 01529 413410.

HMS Cossack Association: Calling all shipmates who served in Cossack (L03 or D57) to join the association and attend the next reunion. A warm welcome awaits you. Contact George Toomey on tel: 01754 872116.

RNAS Eglington 1957-9: Jim 'Paddy' Stroud is in touch with Jimmy Stewart and would like to contact Billy Herridge (REM)A, and Billy 'Smersh' Clarke (EM)A, who served together at RNAS Eglington. Contact Paddy on tel: 01437 720873.

HMS Exeter 1982 onwards: Trying to trace any members of the ship's company during the Falklands Campaign under the command of Capt Hugh Balfour. We are holding our 3rd reunion in May with around 90 members of the ship's company but are trying to increase our numbers for the next one. We would greatly appreciate any help in contacting anyone who served during this period. Please contact Reg Cornall on 0161 304 7496 or email: *reginald.cornall@btinternet.com*.

HMS Galatea: Malcolm was on the first commision 1964=966, home and Mediterranean. The skipper was Capt Plugge, so we were known as the Black Pig. Seeking any old lads that remember him especially: RAS, Bubs, Topsy, Barney, Jock Shaw and Pete Leese from Stoke. Contact Malcolm Yole on tel: 01726 850617 or email: *exkillickstoker@yole9296.freeserve.co.uk*

HMS Ganges (Oct 11, 1960): Seeking former classmates from Frobisher Division, 35 Recruitment, 36 Mess for a planned reunion mid-October 2005. Contact Mike Wilson on tel: 01738 812498 or email: *mikeandeva@btinternet.com*.

HMS Hermes – 5G2 and 2J3 mess Comms 1973-77: Steve Cope and Al Brentnall are looking for anyone who served with them in HMS Hermes: Keith 'Spike' Marlow, Roy Butt, Bryn 'Taff' Huffen, Noel Harvey, Budgie Bird, Colin 'Basil' Farmer, Ian 'Woody' Wood, Taff Gardener, Bob Beetlestone, Andy Loughlin plus many others. Contact Steve on tel: 01934 812377 or email: *stevecope@aol.com* or Al on 0161 6269126 or email: *alanbrek@fsmail.net*.

HMS Matabele (F26): Ernest Higgins was a survivor when Matabele was sunk of Murmansk in January 1942. Last known to be living in Salford area of Manchester. Your old friend and fellow survivor, Bill Chard, would like to hear from you. If anyone has any information regarding Ernest or his whereabouts would they contact Bill Chard on tel: 07818 247744.

HMS Venerable: Ken McDowell is trying to find Edgar Seabury, who was a Dental Surgeon in Venerable in the Far East/Pacific, 1945-6. He would also like to hear from anyone else who was on board at that time. Contact Ken on 0116 279 1583 or via his daughter with email: *homefree@cox.net*.

Able Seaman Alf Chittenden: Torpedo man, 1941-46, celebrating 60 year wedding anniversary on December 31, would like to hear from any old shipmates still around. Served in HMS Duff, Escapade, aircraft carrier Glory, and finally King George V from Australia before demob. Contact Alf on tel: 01268 463238.

HMS Whitesand Bay: Seeking PO Jessie, PO Tom Parker and Ldg Std Nesbit who served in HMS Whitesand Bay in Hong Kong, Christmas 1946. Contact Geoff Nightingale on tel: 01442 263405.

Navy News on tape

Navy News is available free of charge on tape from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number. No special equipment is required to play the standard 90-minute cassettes.

At your Service entries

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The Eaglet is lauded



● *Members of HMS Eaglet parade through the city of Liverpool*

ONE of the Navy's largest reserve units ended its centenary year with the city of Liverpool by thanking it in style.

The Lord Mayor of the city and civic leaders hosted the ship's company of HMS Eaglet and their families in the town hall. Eaglet was granted the freedom of the Mersey city in 1993.

The reception effectively brought the curtain down on celebrations which opened on May 8 with a concert by the Band of the Royal Marines.

Since then, Eaglet – the base for 280 reservists from the north-west and north Wales – has received a new bell, blessed by Bishop of Liverpool and already used for a number of baptisms of offspring of the ship's company.

Prince Michael of Kent (the Prince is Honorary Commodore of the RNR) was the guest of honour to inspect ceremonial divisions – formed not merely of serving personnel but Eaglet veterans. Among distinguished former Eaglets is the last surviving Naval VC winner, Lt Cdr Ian Fraser.

Beyond enjoying some welcome public attention in the Liverpool area, Eaglet's company have used the year to raise £6,500 for KGFS and Claire House Hospice, money raised largely through the RM concert and a centenary ball.

The next major milestone for the unit, based in Liverpool's famous dockland, is 2008 when the city takes on the role of Capital of Culture. As has so often happened in its first century of existence, Eaglet will be called upon again.



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'The enemy were quite outclassed'

THERE will be added poignancy to commemorations in the South Atlantic and London this month as today's sailors pay their respects to forebears 90 years ago.

It is nine decades since the squadron of Admiral Graf von Spee was all but annihilated in the first Naval battle of the Falklands on December 8 1914.

A battle-cruiser force, led by HMS Invincible and Inflexible, was ordered south to slay Spee's force of cruisers after the Germans had routed Rear Admiral Christopher Cradock's Fourth Cruiser Squadron at Coronel in the Pacific on November 1.

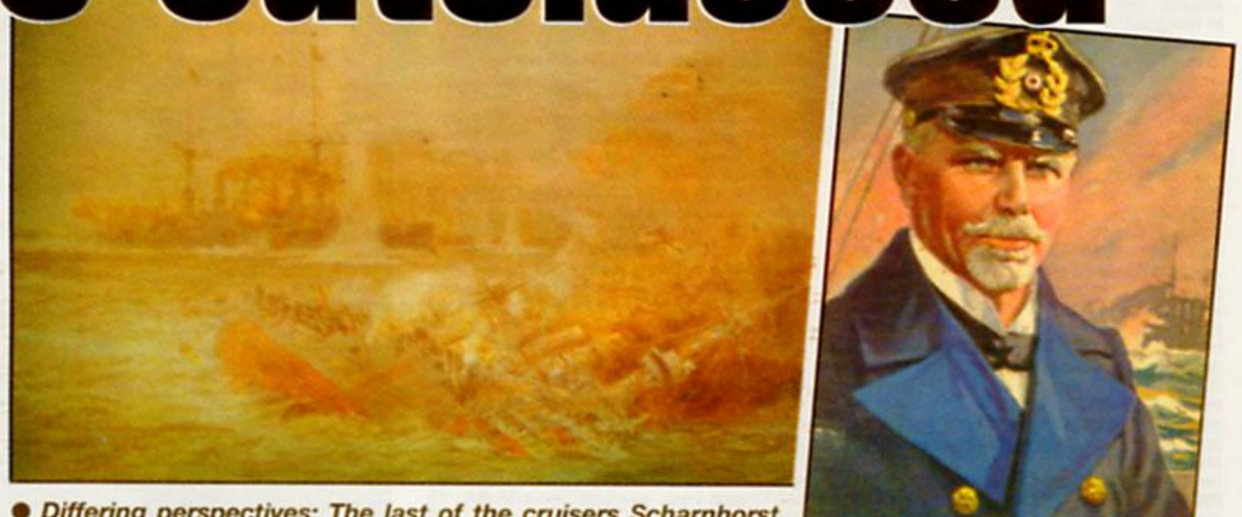
The resulting showdown in the South Atlantic proved to be a shock for von Spee, who steamed towards the Falklands intent on destroying this British outpost.

Instead, he found the battle-cruiser force under Vice Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee in the act of coaling. Sturdee immediately gave chase with his ships which were better armed and faster than Spee's squadron.

The German units hoped to make their escape in the dark – but the British force had caught up with them by early afternoon. Before nightfall, four cruisers of the High Seas Fleet were on the bed of the South Atlantic.

Lt Thomas Dixon, surgeon in HMS Kent, recorded the cruiser's duel with the German SMS Leipzig.

"It was intensely interesting watching a battle at close quarters," he wrote in a dispatch. "Leipzig replied very accurately indeed. Down below we could hear and feel the shells hitting us easily, in spite of the noise of our own guns."



● *Differing perspectives: The last of the cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau as depicted in a British painting and (right) a German wartime magazine's portrait of von Spee*

Kent rescued just seven survivors from her quarry. Leipzig's commanding officer, Johannes Haun, had accepted his fate long before the end of the battle.

"He came on deck and refused to haul down the flag and sat smoking cigarettes till he went down with his ship," Lt Dixon observed.

"The enemy fought splendidly, but were quite outclassed."

The 90th anniversary will be marked with wreathlayings in Stanley, the Falklands' capital, where a memorial was erected to the 1914 victory, and at the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

British victims of the battle are buried in Stanley cemetery and the battle remains etched in the islands' folklore, almost as much as the more recent struggle for the outpost of empire.

"There is the myth of the heavily pregnant lighthouse keeper's wife who galloped into Stanley on horseback to warn of the approach of von Spee," says *Navy News* reader Ninian Evans. "She lost her life, and that of her unborn child... if you believe the story, that is." (The official version is that a Swedish civilian manning an observation post on a hill raised the alarm.)

"You could say that the battle put the Falklands on the map," said Peter Pepper, editor of the *Falkland Islands Newsletter*.

"It remains a big deal to this day. December 8 is a national day on the islands – a public holiday. All the children turn out, the Governor lays a wreath, the Forces parade."

The clash cost ten British lives, and more than 2,200 German, including Graf Spee and his two sons.

The Falklands proved to be a major fillip to British morale; Coronel had dealt a serious blow to the public mood in a country basking in more than a century of unchallenged Naval supremacy.

And with hindsight the battle was the Fleet's "most decisive victory of the war", in Admiral Beatty's words, although Sturdee was widely criticised in the Admiralty for excessive expenditure of ammunition – rather than praised for sparing British lives.

The sole survivor of the battle, the Dresden, was chased by HMS Glasgow and Kent until she was cornered the following March in Juan Fernandez Island where she was scuttled.

You can have your cake... but not eat it

IF you think front-line action is demanding, spare a thought for CPO Mark 'Tugg' Wilson and C/Sgt 'Nutty' Edwards who went without sleep for 36 hours for the honour of the Senior Service.

In Iraq? Afghanistan perhaps? Nope, Sandown Park in Surrey. The senior NCOs were just a couple of the RN competitors in the prestigious Combined Services Culinary Challenge (or cookery olympics if you prefer).

CPO Wilson of RNAS Yeovilton and C/Sgt Edwards of 42 Commando headed a team of killick chefs representing the Senior Service in the open-buffet – one of the more visually impressive feasts laid on at the three-day contest.

None of the buffet was eaten; it was all for show – despite the two chefs and their team having been awake for more than 30 hours by the time the judges came around.

"I love cooking and I stand here looking at what the team has produced and think: 'wow'. But the hours we have spent planning and preparing and cooking, all the stress, the trouble spent making sure the presentation is right, even the lighting, and then it goes straight in the bin," said CPO Wilson ruefully.

Decorative cakes, lard sculptures, bakery, desserts, platters, various main course dishes, the three Services are expected to produce all in team and individual events.

Perhaps the most demanding challenge is a *Ready, Steady Cook*-esque contest against the clock for two chefs and a steward to prepare and serve a three-course meal in 75 minutes – which was most certainly eaten – all under the glare of TV cameras and a 100-strong audience.



● *Flaming success: An RN chef races against the clock to produce a three-course meal*

The contest is the sole place where culinary pride and Inter-Service pride clash.

"This is the only time that the three Services can get together and actually compete against each other. Sadly, the RAF are the business – they're in a league of their own," CPO Wilson added.

And so it proved. The RAF were declared Forces champions – although they didn't have it all their own way. HMS Raleigh cook CH Russell Cartwright took home the title of Junior Chef of the Year after serving up stuffed chicken breast in madeira sauce, sweet potato mash, baby roast vegetables and a rhubarb and almond tartlet dessert.

The RN also collected silver awards for stewarding skills and the show plates sweet.

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Atlantic rendezvous for Castle sisters

AFTER 1,396 days providing protection and reassurance to the people of the Falklands, veteran patrol ship HMS Leeds Castle handed over duties to her sister in the mid-Atlantic, *writes Richard Hargreaves.*

In a rare meeting between the two Castle-class ships, Dumbarton Castle received the flag of the Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands and hoisted it ready to begin her three-year-plus stint in and around the Falklands.

Once the official handover duties had finished a few hundred miles east of Montevideo – Dumbarton's crew were told of the problems they would face operating in a "uniquely challenging environment" – it was time for the sailors to let their hair down somewhat.

"A traditional steam-past took place to conduct ceremonial, as well as exchanging the ship's quota of rotten fruit and comparing fire hose pressures," said Leeds Castle's gunnery officer Lt Joseph Tretton.

The ship clocked up 86,000 miles at sea since departing Portsmouth in 2000, although her 48 crew have only spent six months at a time with her.

And many of those miles have been spent steaming through weather and sea conditions which can inspire awe into the most seasoned of mariners.

"It's been an absolute privilege to be in command as Leeds Castle returned to the UK after nearly four years away in the South Atlantic," said CO Lt Cdr Iain Lower.

"For a small ship's company to have achieved so much, operating 8,000 miles away from UK base support in some of the worst weather conditions in the world just shows the level of teamwork required."

Before departing the Falklands, crew had rededicated the Ardent-Antelope Cross at Campito, overlooking the last resting place of the two frigates lost during the San Carlos landings of 1982.

CPO(WEA) Jason King and CPO(MEA) Andrew Collinson led a team of sailors who dedicated numerous weekends during the Austral winter to restoring the monument – maintaining war memorials from the 1982 conflict is one of the regular duties of the Falkland Islands Patrol Vessel.

A flight deck barbecue and penguin-racing night raised £500 for one of the ship's adopted charities – the Jubilee Nursery for special needs children at Waterlooville in Hampshire.

Leeds Castle arrived home in Portsmouth on November 8.

And despite what this reporter predicted when she departed for the South Atlantic all those months ago, the city's Millennium Tower was still not completed…



● *HMS Dumbarton Castle (right) meets up with sister Leeds Castle in the mid-Atlantic before taking up patrol duties*



● *The two Castle-class patrol ships salute each other in traditional style at an official mid-Atlantic flag handover*

Christmas boxes on their way

THE Ministry of Defence has turned back the clock by reviving a morale-boosting exercise from World War I.

The first Forces' Christmas box was the idea of the teenaged Princess Mary, daughter of King George V and Queen Mary, the intention being that everyone wearing the King's uniform and serving overseas on Christmas Day 1914 should receive "a gift from the nation."

Now that idea has been brought up to date, and the 2004 equivalent is on its way to almost 18,000 people – and hopefully no one will have to wait as long as some in the Great War.

Brig Jeff Little, of the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO), which is helping to organise the boxes, said: "Ninety years ago, the British public showed its support for the UK Servicemen and women in a way never before seen in this country.

"The Princess Mary Christmas Box became an institution – by the time the fund closed in 1920, almost £200,000 had been donated for the provision of more than 2.5 million boxes with contents."

The 1914 version, which contained items such as tobacco, pipes, chocolate, spices and pencils, depending on who was receiving it, was small and made of brass – and because of distribution problems, many of the embossed boxes were still undelivered in early 1919.

The 2004 box – mooted by British industry – is larger, packed in cardboard boxes the same size as ration packs, to allow for easy handling.

It will contain a variety of goods, in some cases even cameras or games, and Brig Little said: "Our aim is to ensure that over the Christmas period every member of the Armed Forces taking part in operations will have a 2004 Christmas box in their 'stocking'."

TV watchers are warned

TV Licensing teams are warning sailors to make sure they have licences ahead of a clampdown on service quarters in coming weeks.

Weekly orders at various RN establishments have stressed the need for Service personnel to ensure they are watching television legally, but telly bosses say the message has unfortunately still not got through to some sailors and Royal Marines.

MOD properties on and off establishments are not exempt from the £121 licence.

A licence is needed to cover each cabin or quarter with a television, even if it is shared accommodation such as the new single-living blocks springing up at Naval establishments.

Defaulters can expect to pay fines of up to £1,000; the detection vans used in civvy street caught an average of 1,000 people per day last year.

Exhibition!

NAVAL firepower museum Explosion! is undergoing an overhaul for 2005 focusing on the 'back-room boys' who kept the RN going.

The former education centre at the Gosport museum is being converted into an exhibition hall concentrating on the victualling efforts to support the once-largest fleet in the world.

The new exhibition, due to open in July 2005, will feature a three-quarter scale model of a transport hoy, a reproduction of a foreman's office and a typical jetty scene.

The gallery takes its inspiration from the Royal Clarence Yard in Gosport, currently being turned into a housing and leisure development.

A specially-commissioned film has been produced for the exhibition, taking the audience around the brewery, cooperage, granary, bakery and slaughterhouse.

As part of the overhaul at the Priddy's Hard museum, a formerly unused building is being turned into an education centre, and landscaping will allow access to a Victorian explosives vault.

More details on the gallery and events is at *www.explosion.org.uk* or 023 9250 5600.

Belfast book is planned

BRITAIN'S last reminder of the days of the 'big gun' warship will be immortalised in print – but this time it is the men of HMS Belfast, not the ship, who will be honoured.

The cruiser, today a museum piece on the Thames near Tower Bridge, served the RN from 1939 until the beginning of the 1970s.

Her career has been well documented by historians, but the HMS Belfast Association wants to focus on the men who were the spirit of the ship – and has been given a grant by the MOD's Veterans Challenge Fund to turn their stories into a book.

"Many technical books have been written about this wonderful ship, but none about the 12,000 men who served and fought in her through her 25 years of active service. This book will be about as many of these men that can be contacted," said Ernest Smith, who is compiling the book, entitled *Men of the Sea*.

The book will also be used as an educational tool for the 50,000 children who tour the cruiser annually.

Anyone who can share stories or photographs of Belfast and life aboard should contact association secretary Ted Hill on 01708 341803.

Tin Can invite

ALLIED veterans who were present at Tokyo Bay in the summer of 1945 are invited to an anniversary celebration in Hawaii next August.

The Tin Can Sailors – the National (US) Association of Destroyer Veterans – along with the Battleship Missouri Memorial, are marking 60 years since the peaceful entry of Allied ships into Japanese waters on August 27 and 28 1945.

They would welcome any RN, RAN, RNZN and Dutch veterans who were at Tokyo Bay in 1945. Write to Tin Can Sailors, Inc, PO Box 100, Somerset MA 02726, USA,email: *pearlharbor2005@destroyers.org*

Home from home for junior rates



● *LCH Stuart Thompson relaxes in his cabin after a day's instructing at the Royal Navy Cookery School at HMS Raleigh*

LIFE for the permanent staff at HMS Raleigh is slightly more homely after new accommodation blocks were opened for junior ratings.

Dreadnought and Repulse blocks are home to 146 leading hands and seamen, each provided with en-suite rooms, plus laundry facilities and communal areas.

Blocks at Raleigh have already opened for senior rates and officers serving at the Torpoint establishment as part of a fundamental overhaul of single living accommodation on MOD bases.

"The new accommodation is comfortable and like a home from home," said LCH Stuart Thompson, who lives at Raleigh during the week.

"The best part is being able to go back to your own space at the end of the day knowing that you can still mix with others if you want to."

New-entry recruits will continue to live in dormitory-style rooms to foster the RN's team spirit and replicate life in mess decks at sea.

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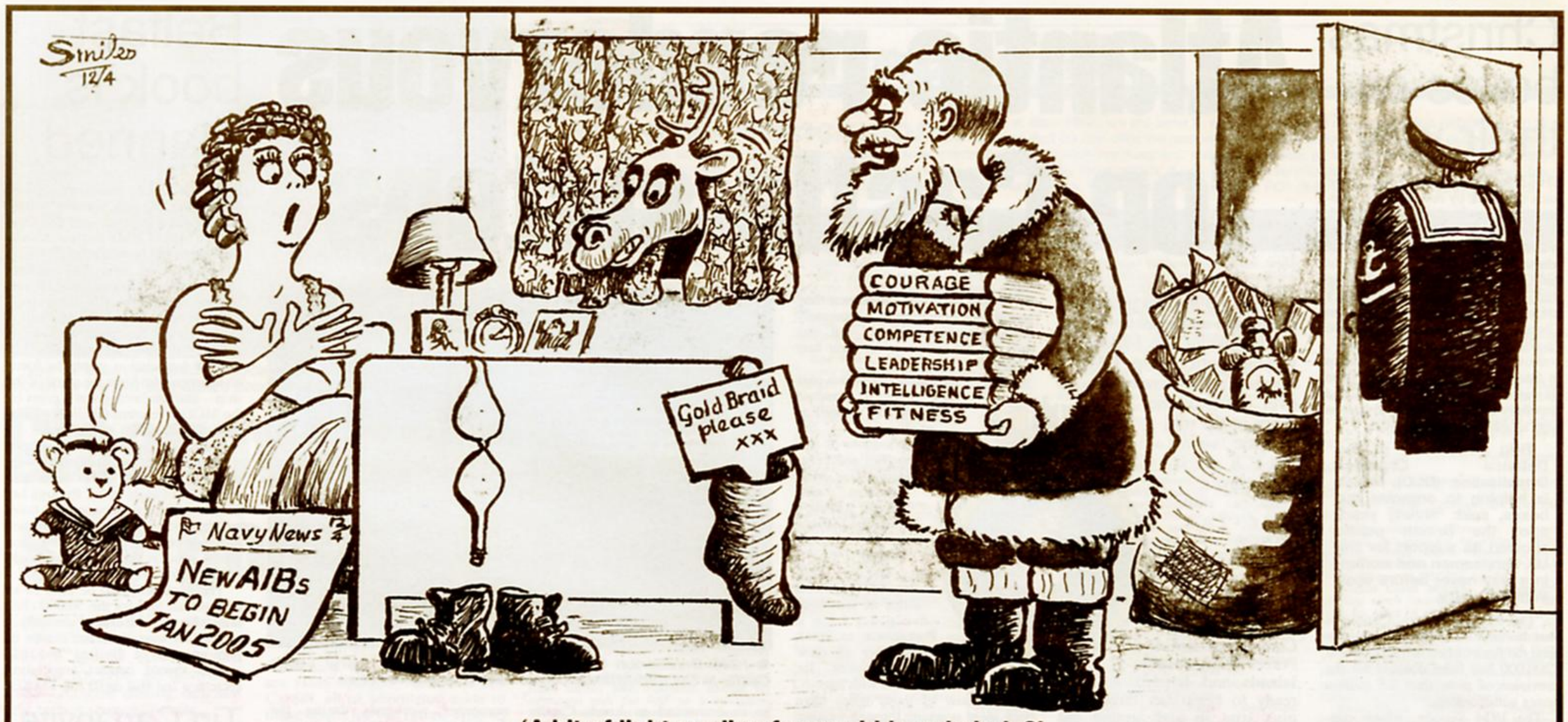
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'A bit of light reading for would-be admirals?'

NEWSVIEW

Leadership in community

THE CHAPLAIN of the Fleet's feeling that today's young Service people are a tad more tuned in to spiritual matters than their immediate forebears were will no doubt come as a big surprise to both parties.

It shouldn't do, though. Over the past century their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents by and large accepted the rightness of the causes they were thrown into by the powers-that-be. The present generation isn't so sure. It tends to ask questions – and expects answers.

There don't seem to be any immediate answers in the current conflict – we face a foe who has moved the goal posts so far off the pitch that it amounts to a whole new ball game with rules (if there are any) we have yet to establish.

Barry Hammett may not have a clear set of answers – none of us do, as yet. But he understands the questions his own parishoners are asking and also understands where they are coming from.

Naval chaplains, from their shared experience, are uniquely qualified to engage in the debate. They are neither 'holy joe' nor 'happy clappy' ministers to their flock, having instead a sensible, pragmatic view of its concerns and needs. Their counterparts in the wider, civilian parish should take note of the Senior Service's own common-sense sense of community and translate it back into the spiritual leadership in which they were once pre-eminent.

Against that we have the widely reported and at first sight highly sensational decision by the CO of HMS Cumberland, after due consultation with his own ship's chaplain, to allow a member of his ship's company to register as a practising Satanist. How does that sit with the Senior Service's view of itself as a 'Force for Good'?

Well, we are all now required by law to give provision in the workplace for employees to follow the devotions of their chosen beliefs – and in that context this must be the right decision.

The official line is: "As a matter of general policy, personal requests for time and facilities to observe religious or other beliefs are considered by commanding officers, provided that they do not impact on the operational effectiveness and general well-being and welfare of other personnel." It is insisted that the sailor does NOT perform any satanic rituals aboard ship.

For most of our sailors the sensible, mature view of LCT Chris Cranmer's somewhat eccentric stance will no doubt be one of amused tolerance and, ultimately, of dismissal of one who is simply 'trying it on' – which is another great tradition of the Senior Service at all levels and one we would never wish to lose.

But – and it is a big but – for the young, impressionable teenagers who make up a large proportion of the RN's serving strength, the idea of one of their company espousing an arcane art with the most dangerous associations may well present a problem of morale. One neither they nor their parents will be comfortable with.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that the Royal Marines initial training camp at Lympstone, which you might assume to demand a necessarily brutal regimen if it is to turn out some of the world's best-respected shock troops, has been singled out instead for the spiritual and moral support it offers to new recruits (see page 15).

So the Chaplain of the Fleet may well be on to something there after all.

Sea change in officer selection system

Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition – nor does the AIB

THE GREATEST changes in more than 30 years will help the Navy of today choose the leaders of tomorrow.

From next month the next generation of officers will face a different examination from their predecessors as they are put through the Admiralty Interview Board.

The Board, or AIB in common RN parlance, has taken the acid test to determine whether a person has got the 'right stuff' to make an officer of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines or in the Senior Service's reserves since 1903.

More than a century on, present Second Sea Lord Vice-Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent asked his AIB team to ensure the board picked the right young people to rise to the challenges of front-line duties in the 21st century.

The selection process has barely changed since the admiral passed, or for that matter the Captain AIB, Capt Ian Goddard, a successful candidate from 1969.

The result is a 'refined' two-day test for the eager officer candidates arriving at HMS Sultan.

It's not that the long-standing mix of interviews, presentations and challenges have produced the wrong officers. Far from it, but there was room for some changes says Capt Goddard.

"I believe the old system selected high-quality candidates for the officer corps, and the new system will ensure we continue to do so," he added.

"We've refined the process so that we are even more sure that the people we select are the ones we want to be the officers of the RN in the 21st century."



● *TESTING TIME: officer candidates are put in a tricky situation by the Admiralty Interview Board*

Among the changes introduced are a fitness assessment, a fairer set of practical tests which allow all candidates an equal chance to show off their skills, a presentation on an exercise candidates have had to perform, dropping a one-to-one interview and re-educating the panel who perform the interviews.

In all these tests, run over two days, the assessors will be looking for five key attributes they believe make a good officer: effective intelligence, leadership, communication skills (both written and oral), courage and values and service motivation.

In a shrinking Navy and with the temptations of civvy street, the officer corps is fighting with the Army and the RAF, the police and business to find fresh blood.

As yet, there is no shortage of that fresh blood: 1,400 people each year aim to be officers, chaplains, dentists or surgeons in the Royal Navy.

Competition to join the officer corps of the Royal Marines is especially fierce with 150 or so candidates competing for 50 or so places at the Commandon Training Centre in Lympstone.

The AIB is not an easy ride – half the candidates are unsuccessful – but then again nor is it the Spanish Inquisition.

"We are trying to make the AIB as least daunting as possible," Capt Goddard added.

"Most candidates feel it's a great experience, whether they are accepted or not, and they feel that they have learned about themselves.

"But at the end of the day, the Naval environment places great demands on people – physically and mentally – and their friends and family.

"Joining the Royal Navy should not be based on some romantic notion like *Master and Commander*."

The introduction of the fitness test, based on the 'bleep test' serving personnel undergo, is perhaps the most significant change.

"The Navy as a whole has become more attuned to physical fitness – it's a fundamental part of Service life," Capt Goddard explained.

● NEWS FROM HMS VICTORY

Taking tea, and careful notes, with Nelson at La Maddalena

As announced last month, *Dr Colin White* will be spending the coming months 'embedded' as *Navy News*' own correspondent on board HMS Victory as Vice Admiral Lord Nelson embarks on the long campaign to bring Napoleon's navy – and his allied Spanish Fleet – to battle.

He has just filed his first report . . .



● *WAR CORRESPONDENT: Seated at Nelson's writing table,Colin White files his first report from HMS Victory*

HMS Victory, Agincourt Sound, La Maddalena, Sardinia, 31 December 1804.

TWO days ago I joined HMS Victory at this splendid anchorage. It lies on the north coast of Sardinia: a great expanse of sheltered water, rather like Scapa Flow, protected from storms by the surrounding islands.

Lord Nelson has been using it as his forward base for almost two years now and the day after I arrived here he brought the battlefleet in, after nearly eight weeks constantly at sea.

This is supposed to be a respite for the ships and their crews but they are not doing much resting. The place is a hive of activity, with boats moving everywhere – collecting stores from the transport vessels that were waiting for them;taking water barrels to be refilled at the nearby streams and transporting cattle from the shore to be slaughtered on board the ships.

I met Lord Nelson shortly after I arrived on board. I was taken to the Victory's great cabin – a spacious apartment, right in the stern, brilliantly lit by windows running the full width of the ship and comfortably furnished.

At first I hardly noticed him. Sitting in a black leather chair with papers all around him, and in his shirtsleeves, he looked like a secretary. Until, that is, he heard my name as I was introduced; then he turned, so that I could see his familiar face and the stump of his missing arm.

He leapt to his feet and came to greet me with a friendly smile, shook me warmly by the hand, and thanked me for coming. He is not nearly as short as I expected: his figure is slim, almost boyish, but he is of average height, about five feet six or seven inches, I would guess. He has a shock of sandy-grey hair, which he wears pulled back into a pigtail, and piercing blue eyes, which fix and hold yours while he is speaking.

Of course one of the eyes is blind, but it was difficult to tell which one (there is no obvious disfigurement) until I presented him with my letter of introduction from the *Navy News* Editor, Jim Allaway. Then I noticed that he turned his head slightly so that he could focus the left eye on the writing.

After a brief conversation, he passed me over to his secretary, John Scott, who explained that I had been entered on the Victory's muster list as a member of the 'admiral's suite', which means that I will be living and messing with Lord Nelson and his staff.

This morning I was roused by one of the admiral's servants at six o'clock, with a light and hot water for shaving and, having dressed, I was shown into the admiral's dining cabin, where breakfast was served. As the ship had just replenished her stores, there was plenty of excellent food – hot rolls, cold tongue and other meats, and tea served from a splendid brass urn.

The conversation was all about the French fleet at Toulon. Apparently the most recent reports from the scouting frigates left watching them when the battlefleet came to La Maddalena, say that they appear to be preparing to leave port.

The rest of the day was spent getting to know my new surroundings. Then, at about a quarter to three, a drum started beating out the rhythm of that famous old song 'The Roast Beef of Old England'. I had been warned that this was the signal that the admiral's dinner was about to be served. So I went again to the dining cabin where the long mahogany table had been laid for 16 people with some splendid silver on display.

As we waited for the first course to be served, I noticed a portrait hanging on the bulkhead opposite me of a very beautiful woman, with her auburn hair arranged in fashionable ringlets, and a high-necked, high-busted dress. Lord Nelson spotted me looking at her and called down the table, "I see you are admiring my Guardian Angel! Gentlemen – a toast! To Santa Emma!"

It was then that I realised that the portrait is of Emma Hamilton – the admiral has a painting of his mistress displayed for all to see! And, judging by the enthusiasm with which the toast was drunk, none of his officers feel any embarrassment about this.

Halfway through dinner a thin man with a hesitant, rather nervous manner, dressed in a crumpled black suit, slipped into a vacant seat at the other end of the table. My neighbour explained that this was Dr Alexander Scott, the Victory's chaplain.

Shortly afterwards, the dinner party broke up and we all went out onto the quarterdeck where we strolled about, walking off the excellent meal. After an hour or so of exercise, I was about to go below and write up the events of this remarkable day, when Dr Scott appeared beside me. "His Lordship has asked me to explain the situation to you," he said and walked with me up the ladder leading to the poop deck, where we could talk in private.

It turns out that, as well as being the Victory's chaplain, Dr Scott is also one of Lord Nelson's chief intelligence agents and he told me he had just returned from a meeting ashore with one of his contacts.

Of course I must be careful about how much I give away – especially the actual sources of the information. But I am able to tell you that the reports that the French are on the verge of sailing have been confirmed.

They have their topmasts hoisted and their battleships have begun to move down the anchorage, ready to sail when the wind is favourable. Most important, Dr Scott's contact has discovered that they have embarked troops and cavalry equipment, which means that they must be planning a landing somewhere.

Until recently, it was thought that they might be planning to head out of the Mediterranean to join with other forces in the Channel, where we know that the new Emperor Napoleon is massing troops on the north coast of France ready for an invasion of Britain. But now that we know that they have troops on board this seems unlikely, since they would not be carrying them so far.

It now looks as if they are bound somewhere in the Mediterranean. And the most likely target is our one remaining ally in this area – the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily.

I asked why we were still at anchor and not rushing northwards to block the French fleet's route. Dr Scott explained that this anchorage is a good central position in which to wait until the intentions of the French have become clear.

"Once we know in which direction they are sailing," he said, "we will be able to shape our course to intercept them."

So I have obviously arrived just in time. The campaign is hotting up and everyone thinks that, if the French do come out as expected, there could be a major battle within a few days – probably somewhere off the south of Sardinia.

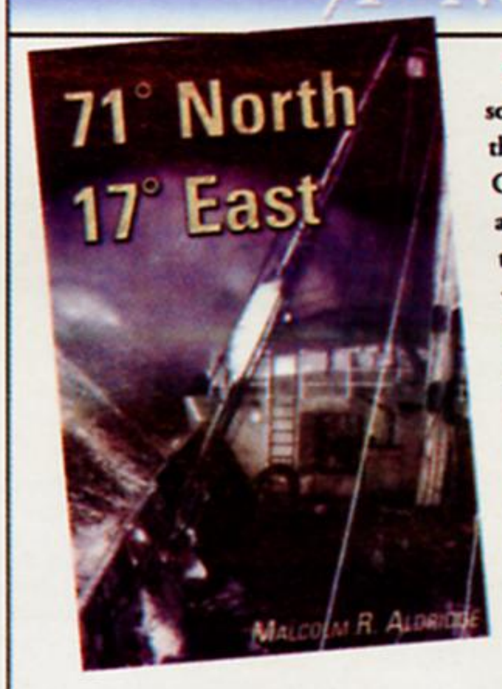
❑ *Colin White is Deputy Director of the Royal Naval Museum and currently seconded to the National Maritime Museum where he is Guest Curator for the Museum's major exhibition,* Nelson & Napoléon *(July 7 - November 13 2005).*

He will be publishing the results of his ground-breaking Nelsonian research in two books next year: Nelson – The New Letters *(April) and* Nelson the Admiral, *in association with the Royal Navy and with a foreword by the First Sea Lord (September)*



'. . . one of the eyes is blind but it was difficult to tell which one (there is no obvious disfigurement) . . . I noticed that he turned his head slightly so that he could focus the left eye on the writing.'

71° North 17° East



Malcolm Aldridge's book describes a life at sea, at times so savagely uncompromising it will stun the reader. It is the story of distant-water trawlers that crossed the Arctic Circle, sailing as far north as Spitzbergen in search of fish, and of men who were brave enough to face all the perils of the Arctic. The author explains how these men had to work days of up to eighteen hours whilst being deluged by freezing spray as they operated dated and dangerous equipment. Working under these conditions led to a heavy accident and fatality rate and some paid the ultimate for their adventure; their ships 'lost without trace' in ferocious weather and Arctic darkness.

At the heart of the book is a detailed log which takes the reader on a three week voyage on the Oratava to the fishing grounds off the north Cape of Norway. As the author recounts, this was an unforgettable voyage from which he was lucky to return.

Malcolm Aldridge was born in Norfolk and educated at Yarmouth Grammar School. On leaving school at sixteen he spent seven years working in various fields of trade and industry. He later returned to education, training to be a PE teacher at Keswick Hall, Norwich and went on to gain a BA in History & Education with the Open University.

Still working in education, the author now lives in Beccles, Suffolk. His many interests include keeping fit, mountain and fell walking, marine and landscape oil painting and travel.

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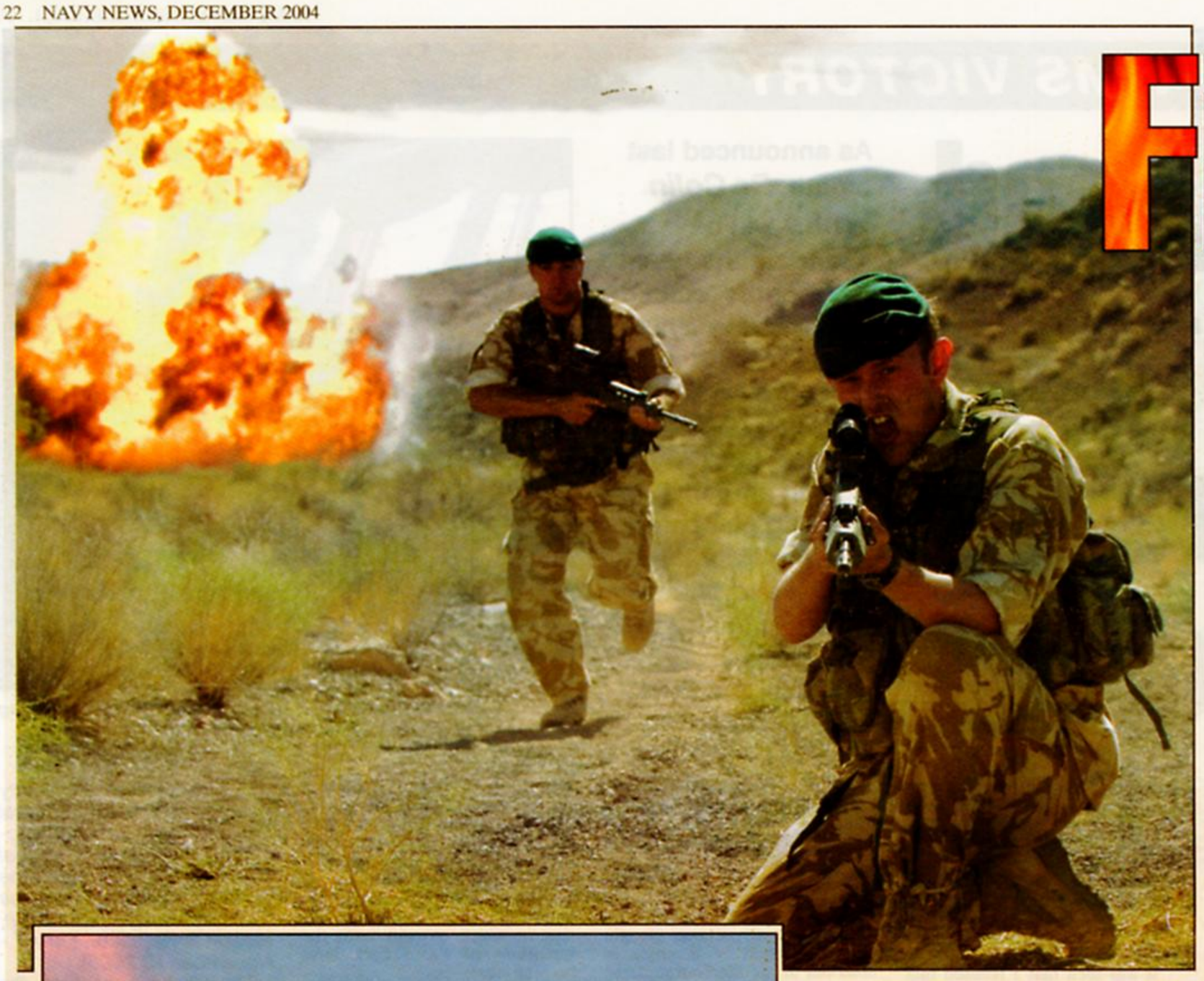
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Fire in t

SILHOUETTED against the orange glow of the pre-dawn sky, a machine-gun section unleashes a metallic hail.

Red tracer hurtles through the sky, spinning wildly as it ricochets off the rocks.

Convoys of Humvees rumble through the valley below, packed with green berets, followed by the even louder rumble of M1 Abrams battle tanks, churning up the dust tracks.

Overhead Cobra gunships loose a volley of rockets before roaring off.

The whoosh, whoosh, whoosh of mortar fire mingles with the chatter of the general-purpose machine-guns.

One, two, three, four. The hillside two kilometres away is enveloped in a circle of smoke and dust as the accurate mortar fire obliterates the enemy position.

A few seconds later the sound wave from the explosion drifts across the ravine to the observation post. Boom, boom, boom, boom.

This is not Iraq. This is not Afghanistan. This is the United States. This is Twentynine Palms in the Mojave desert, barely two hours from Los Angeles. This is the ultimate place to prepare a marine for front-line combat. This is the acid test, bar war itself.

For a month, the 600-plus men of 45 Commando and their supporting Army units were guests of the US Marine Corps as the Royals simulated full combat in the rugged terrain of the Mojave (*pronounced Mo-Harvey*).

The USMC base at Twentynine Palms – the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center to give it its correct title – is 930 square miles of desert where you can call upon just about everything in the conventional weapons arsenal.

For Exercise Black Horse, the Arbroath-based Royals could count on support from Cobra helicopter gunships, RAF Tornado and US B1 bombers, battle tanks, field artillery, mortars and light and heavy small arms. This is as real as combat gets, minus the enemy.

ROYAL MARINES of punishing Californian d US counterparts. RICH

"Live firing is the acid test of a marine's ability. It's hard work, but it's also very rewarding," said 45's Commanding Officer Lt Col Nick Lindley.

"It's a complex business co-ordinating artillery, mortars, helicopters, air strikes with marine operations. We don't have a chance of doing it in the UK. Coming out here has been eye-opening."

Eye-opening indeed. The US Marines are a self-contained armed force with their own armour, air support, even ships (not much call for the latter in the desert though).

They can call upon firepower our Royals can only dream of – and in a world where the two marine forces are increasingly fighting side-by-side, an exercise through the Mojave desert is an ideal way of perfecting co-operation.

Twentynine Palms may be the perfect facility, but it is not perfect terrain to wage war over.

"The lads were probably expecting sand dunes," said Lt Col Lindley.

"It's a barren, rocky environment with a lot of beasties – and on top of that you're recreating war fighting."

The land in the Mojave desert is, in Marine-parlance, 'honkin'.

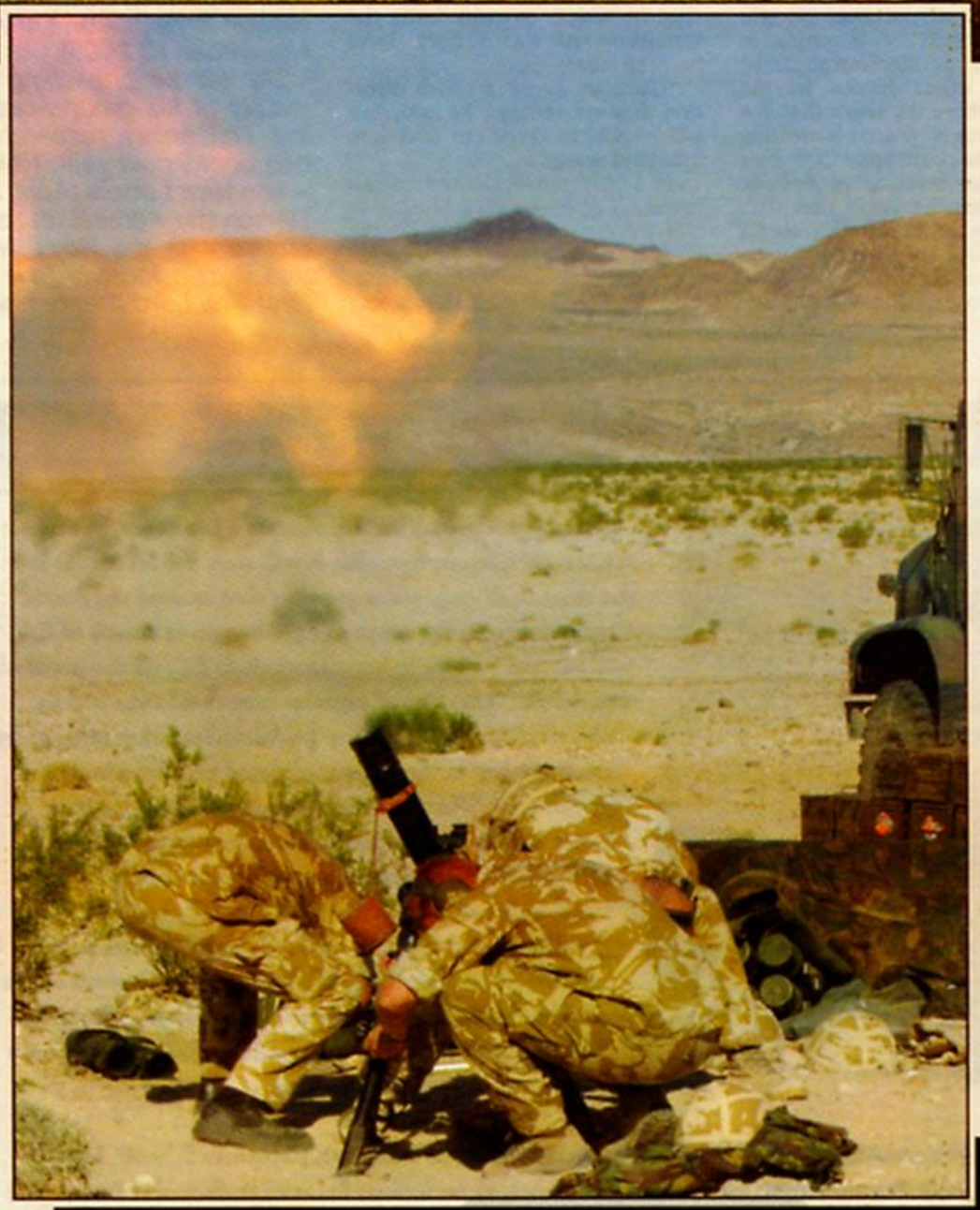
This is not a desert of endless rolling sand dunes. This is a reddish desert, of hills and troughs, gullies, where the ground isn't soft, grainy sand, but a sort of rocky scree, difficult to walk upon,



● *Well it's a lot easi commando clamber side in the Mojave de*

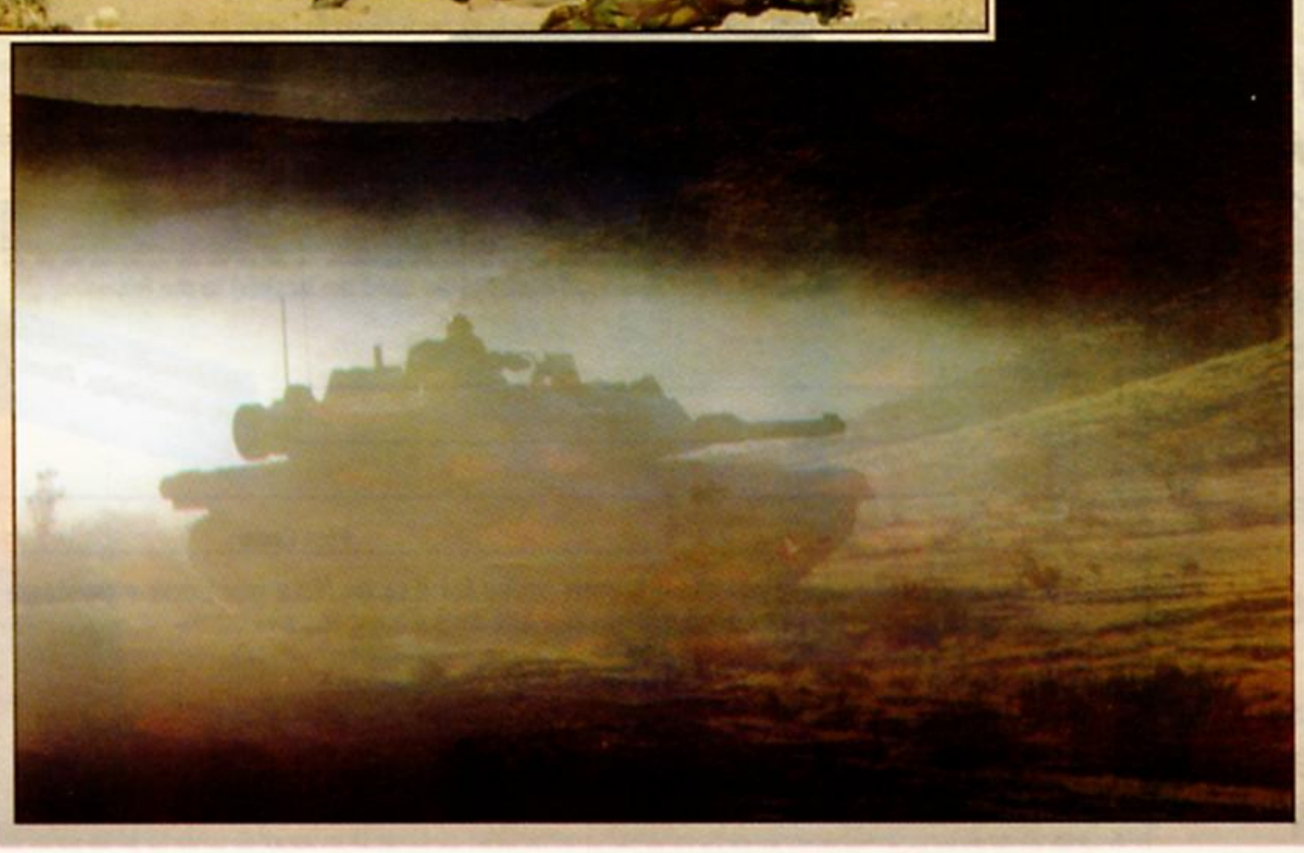
● *Fireball 45: (Above) The pyrotechnic wizardry of Condor Troop, 45 Commando's attached Royal Engineer unit, provides a stunning backdrop for two Royals charging the NME front line*

Pictures: PO(Phot) Tam McDonald, 3 Cdo Bde, and LA(Phot) 'Stubbsy' Stubbens, 45 Cdo



● *Mortar, mortar everywhere... (Left) A commando mortar crew lay down a barrage on an NME position*

● *Armoured support: (Below) A US Marine Corps M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank trundles through the early-morning haze*



'A barren, rocky environment w

WHATEVER you do, don't squash a turtle.

With all the bombs, mortars, machine-gun bullets and ordnance flying around Twentynine Palms, there's one creature (apart from humans, that is) which must be protected above all else: the endangered desert turtle.

Every marine arriving on the base received strict instructions to look after the shelled reptile which inhabits the vast exercise area. Fines and even imprisonment awaited any green beret who deliberately killed the creatures – or accidentally squashed a turtle and failed to report it.

The warning was all part of the obligatory 'bugs and bunnies' lecture by Marine Corps environmentalists (there are bugs aplenty here, bunnies though are few and far between).

Snakes, scorpions, black widow and tarantula spiders are all lurking out on the range, plus African honey bees: if you kill one it emits a chemical which attracts the entire hive to the scene.

Bites and stings formed but a small part of the workload for the commando unit's medics.

"In 14 days we saw 350 patients," said Surg Lt Jamie Phillips, 45's medical officer. "Skin rashes, infections, sunburn, fractures. Not surprisingly heat illnesses are the biggest problem out here."

By day temperatures were touching 40°C – more than 100°F.

Lugging 40lbs or so of kit around in that sort of heat means you shed a lot of sweat. Lose 4.5 litres of water – roughly a gallon – and you're on the verge of kidney failure. To compensate, the men were drinking upwards of 10 litres every day in the field.

"What's really important is that the lads look out for each other," Surg Lt Phillips added. "It's not a sign of weakness to go down with heat illness."

The heat poses more of a problem than simply causing dehydration. It's a bacterial paradise. Cuts rapidly become infected if not treated properly.

The conditions too are punishing on the marines' kit, added to by the fact that 45 Cdo was using American vehicles; the mechanics of the logistics company had to learn how to fix the Humvees the US forces use in abundance.

"We got through about 45 tyres and wheels in about a month," said logistics company commander Maj Jon Clare. "Humvees don't carry spares, so that's obviously a problem. General wear and tear is two or three times worse than in the UK."

Exhausting too is supporting the front line. Beyond the 6,000 litres of water sent forward daily, upwards of 1,800 ration packs (or Meals Ready to Eat as the Americans prefer) were sent to

the troo day – cho of t pa reg am ing rifle, the me in its modi front-line troo bly in this des



the hold

45 Commando have spent one month in the esert for the ultimate in live-firing exercises with their ARD HARGREAVES visited them.



excruciating to lie upon.

Still, at least with all those hills, it's easier to get your bearings... or maybe not, as one ridge looks very much like the next.

"It is really harsh terrain," explained 23-year-old Mne Michael Horrox from Manchester. "Even in Afghanistan there was some green. Here you get down and you're torn to bits if you try to move along the ground."

A few miles behind the 'front line' the 105mm guns of Sphinx Battery, 29 Cdo Regt Royal Artillery – the army unit attached to the green berets – unleashes a ferocious barrage.

Shells hurtle from the barrels, screaming through the air like a jet aircraft, leaving behind a cloud on the gunline and the familiar smell of cordite.

The gunners have all passed the All Arms Commando Course which entitles them to don the coveted green beret. "There's no extra pay in it for us," explained Sgt Richard Bociek. "It's about the pride.

"Most of the guys in the battery have relatives who were marines, so there's very much a family feeling out here."



er than going up... A s down a rocky hill- esert

The family feeling extends to the US troops, who shared base camp with the Royals during the exercise.

"The US marines are not RM Commandos – they equate us more with their special forces. They are very respectful to us – just for the fact that we have the word 'royal' in our name," said Cpl Bart Ledger.

L/Cpl Neil Fellows added: "Sometimes you look around and see the Yanks' kit and think it's really good – but then they still want to swap some kit with us. It's not all one way.

"The work out here has actually been harder than Iraq or Afghanistan. But once you start putting the rounds down, you forget about the effort and enjoy the experience."

The rounds were 'put down' on the NME (*enemy, get it?*), the fictional faction threatening the stability of the region. The commandos were sent in to the deal with them.

Twentynine Palms' Commanding Officer, Brig Gen Rick Zilmer, spent two years on exchange with the Royals in Poole so he knows the capability of the green berets.

"Their reputation is without equal," the brigadier said unreservedly. "45 Commando are outstanding soldiers."

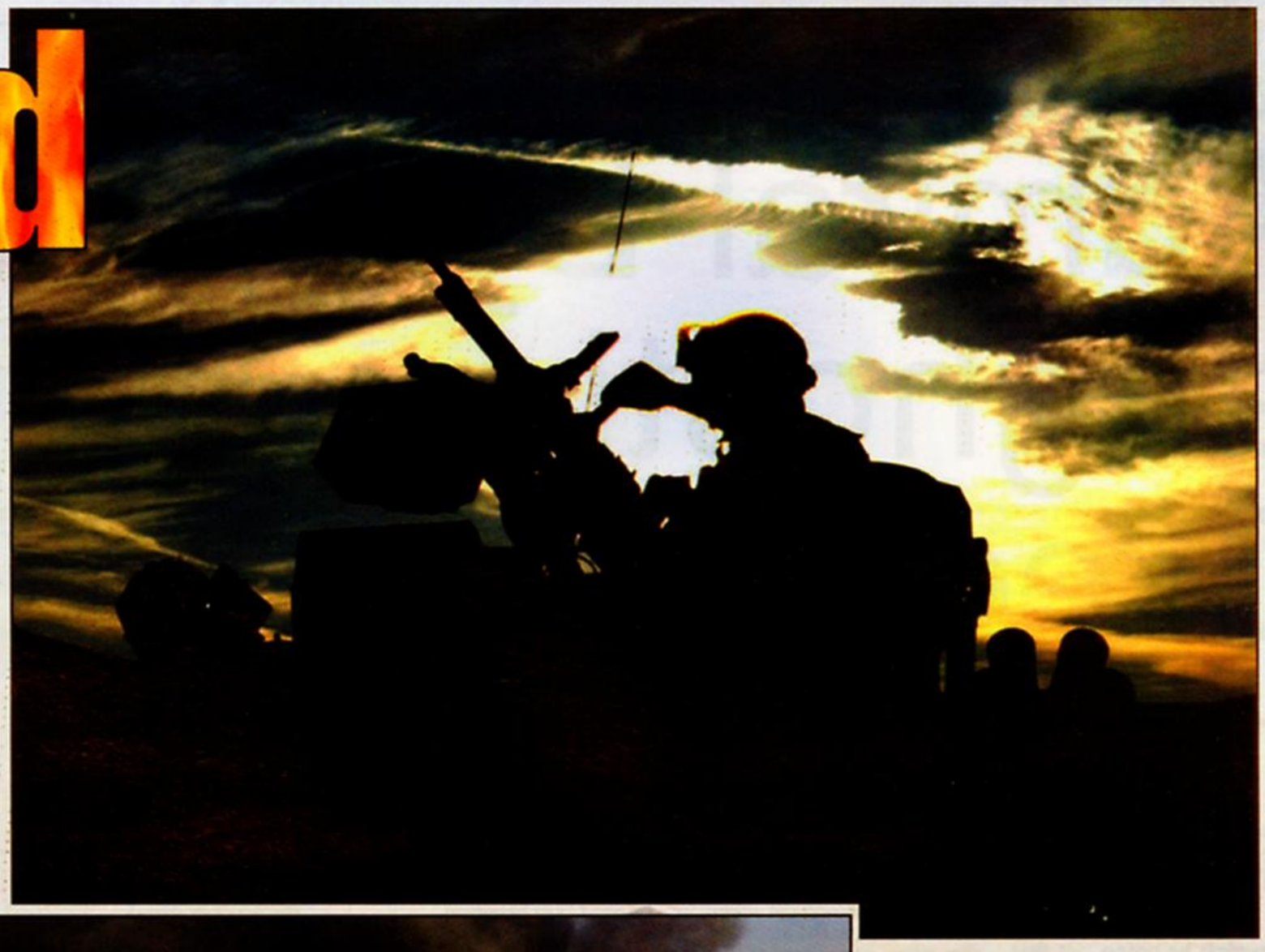
For the brigadier, exercises such as Black Horse are crucial in the 21st century theatre.

"We see very few crises in the future which will not involve a coalition. Combat is not the time to work out co-operation. This is the place to do that. It's a gunner's paradise – but it's also extremely hard work," he added.

Brig Gen Zilmer's base is the first strand of Black Horse for 45; the commandos have since moved on to the mountains east of San Francisco to learn how to operate at altitudes upwards of 12,000ft.

So has the 'acid test' of live firing been worth it? 45's Commanding Officer is in no doubt.

"The experience has been invaluable. It's been a steep learning curve, but now we have a very competent unit ready to go on operations anywhere in the world," Lt Col Lindley added.





● *I see a great big silhouette of a man... (Above) The imposing sight of US armour preparing to attack NME positions and (left) scorched earth: the desert burns as 45 Commando prepares to move off*

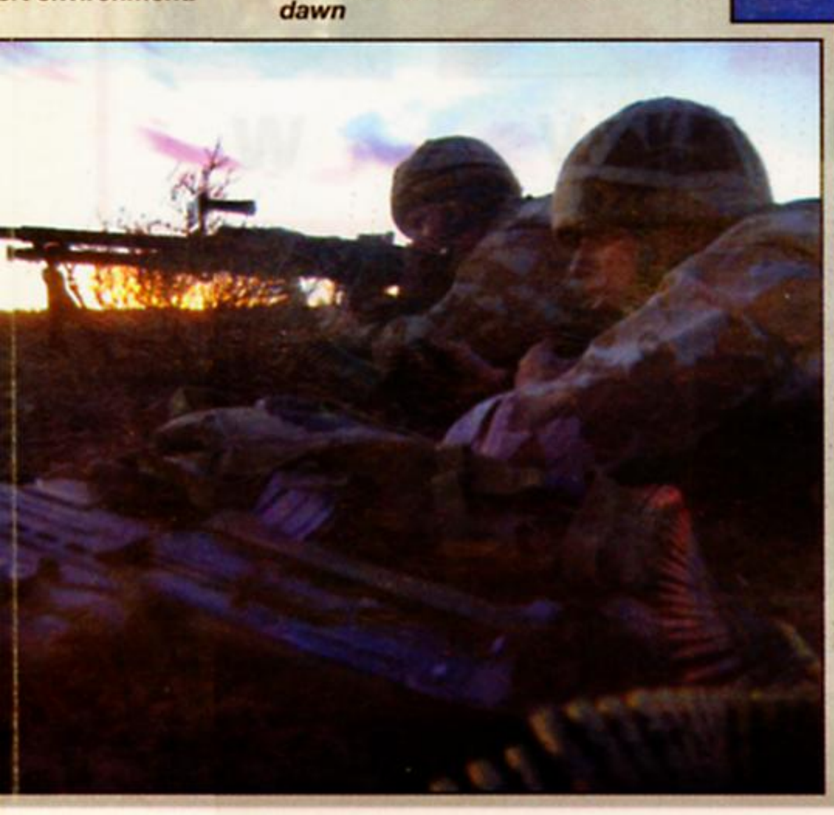
with a lot of beasties'

ops in the field each - each green beret mps through three the US-supplied cks a day – plus gular re-supplies of mmunition. What was perform- well was the SA80 much derided by dia, much praised ified form by the ps. It fired admira- ert environment.

And although this is desert, it cannot be trashed. 45 has to leave the Mojave pretty much as it found it.

"Don't forget the vast amounts of rubbish generated which have to be brought back and environmentally sorted for disposal," Maj Clare added. "It's all akin to solving a huge Chinese puzzle at every step of the exercise."

● *No, I tell you it's not the aurora borealis... (Below) On the gunline at dawn*





● *Pre-dawn patrol: (Above) A solitary marine surveys the rugged Mojave terrain from the top of a ridge*

Palms d'or

FOR 52 years, the US Marine Corps has sent its men and women to Twentynine Palms for the final battle hardening before front-line deployment.

The base sits about 120 miles east of Los Angeles, 200 or so miles from the pleasure paradise of Las Vegas, and on the edge of the Joshua Tree National Park (yes, *that* Joshua Tree, and despite the impression U2 gave, there's more than one of them).

The town itself – named, not surprisingly, after the ubiquitous palm trees (there were actually only 26 of them though when someone did a survey shortly after the place was settled) – is a fairly nondescript place which relies heavily on the neighbouring military base.

You don't find barbers here, rather combat barbers. *Would that be a number one, number two or flat-top, sir?*

The sprawling base – the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center – lies on the northern edge of the town. Besides a headquarters (complete with department store, take-away outlets, golf course, bank, restaurants, garage, bars, internet café, video rental store) a number of subsidiary camps serve as bases for the visiting units exercising on the ranges.

Home to 45 Commando was Camp Wilson, a drab and dusty series of Nissen-esque huts which were remarkably cool despite the searing daytime temperatures.

And even here, in the apparent middle of nowhere, there was a shop, gym, washeteria (or laundromat if you prefer), cinema, church, even a Chinese take-away and, er, souvenir stall.

On the ranges, the exercising troops can call upon battle tanks, armoured personnel carriers, 155mm howitzers.

What you expect to find on a battlefield, you will find at Twentynine Palms – even UAVs, the unmanned spy-planes circling the troops below.

Oh, and there's an airfield too, supporting 3,600 hours of flight operations a year – guzzling five million gallons of fuel in the process.

At Your Leisure

Admiral Byng – star turn at ghostly Greenwich



● *HAUNTED: the interior of Queen Anne Court, looking toward the pavilion where Admiral Byng was held captive*

DOES the ghost of Admiral Byng haunt the old Naval College at Greenwich? Malcolm Godfrey thinks it might.

In his intriguing little booklet **Walking Ghostly Greenwich** he points out that the Admiral famously executed *pour encourager les autres* has been spotted there more often than any other resident spirit.

In 1756 John Byng was despatched, with a woefully inadequate squadron, to defend Minorca. He engaged the French fleet, suffered severe losses and withdrew leaving the colony to its fate in French hands.

On his return to Gibraltar, he was arrested and escorted back to England to face charges that carried a mandatory death penalty. The purpose was to draw attention away from inept leadership by the Government of the day (among whom Byng anyway had a number of enemies).

Court martialled, found guilty and shot by firing squad, Byng had earlier been incarcerated in Queen Anne Court – and his shade has returned there ever since, at one time so frequently that some staff actually submitted a request for an exorcism to be carried out.

However, he is not a malevolent spirit – as he recently demonstrated to an electrician who met him in the basement . . .

The man actually described the experience to Godfrey, who was doing a stint as 'Duty Officer' in the building, immediately after it happened.

"'Excuse me, can I ask you a question?' I looked up from my desk, and framed in the doorway stood a man dressed in white overalls, his pallor matching his atire. He was the electrician supposed to be working within Queen Anne Court, on a minor rewiring task, and looked as if he had given himself an electric shock.

"I offered him a seat, which he declined. 'Are you alright?' I asked, expecting a negative response. Almost breathless now, he repeated that he needed to ask me a question because of something that had just happened.

"After a deep, steadying breath he explained that he had been kneeling in one of the rooms on the first floor, in the process of fitting some new electrical sockets with his tool roll laid out beside him.

"Working quietly, in a world of his own, he suddenly realised that his tools were being handed to him. He had thought himself alone in the building, after letting himself in and locking the door behind him.

"He described his 'assistant' as 'a friendly old man in uniform' who had not spoken, but had smiled and nodded in benign acknowledgement. The surprise had caused the electrician to close his eyes briefly, and when he opened them, the old man had vanished. The uniform he described, a frock coat with gold braid and gold buttons, sounded similar to to those worn by residents when the College had been the Royal Hospital for Seamen.

"The electrician had looked around for the old man, and had sought me out to ascertain whether anyone fitting that description could be working on site that day. To my knowledge, the only person regularly in the College and possessing a uniform remotely resembling the one worn by the electrician's elderly helpmate, was the Yeoman of the Painted Hall, who dressed by day in civvies, his uniform being preserved for ceremonial occasions only.

"The Yeoman was on duty that day, showing visitors around, certainly not in uniform in or anywhere near Queen Anne Court.

"The electrician and I spoke fora while, seeking a practical reason to explain the presence of the old man, and it gradually dawned on us both that this manifestation may not have been of the material world. The electrician decided to sit down after all."

Another sighting possibly related to Byng occurred in the Queen Anne Court basement.

"A member of the maintenance staff had just finished work there and was preparing to leave, carrying his tools and a small ladder. As he approached the exit, he saw someone holding the door open for him. Grateful for the unprompted assistance, the maintenance man proceeded through the doorway and turned to say thank you.

"He was shocked to find nobody there, and vowed never to enter the basement again. He was unable to give a description of the friendly doorman, but this episode bears a remarkable similarity to the electrician's experience."

Admiral Byng, it is said, was held in the North Pavilion, manacled to a wall by a window that overlooked the Thames. During the Navy's tenure of the college, apartments in the Pavilion were occupied by senior officers. When one of the cleaning staff heard footsteps on the stone staircase outside the apartment in which she was working, she assumed it was a colleague working in an adjacent apartment.

"However, when she went outside she was shocked to find nobody there. She was very scared and shaken by this strange occurrence and stated that she would never clean in those particular apartments again. . ."

❑ **Walking Ghostly Greenwich Part 1** is available from Malcolm Godfrey at £4.99, from Linear House, Peyton Place, Greenwich SE10 8RS. He is currently researching a book on nautical ghosts and is interested to hear from anyone who has had experiences with the supernatural, at sea or ashore.

JUST FOR THE DURATION

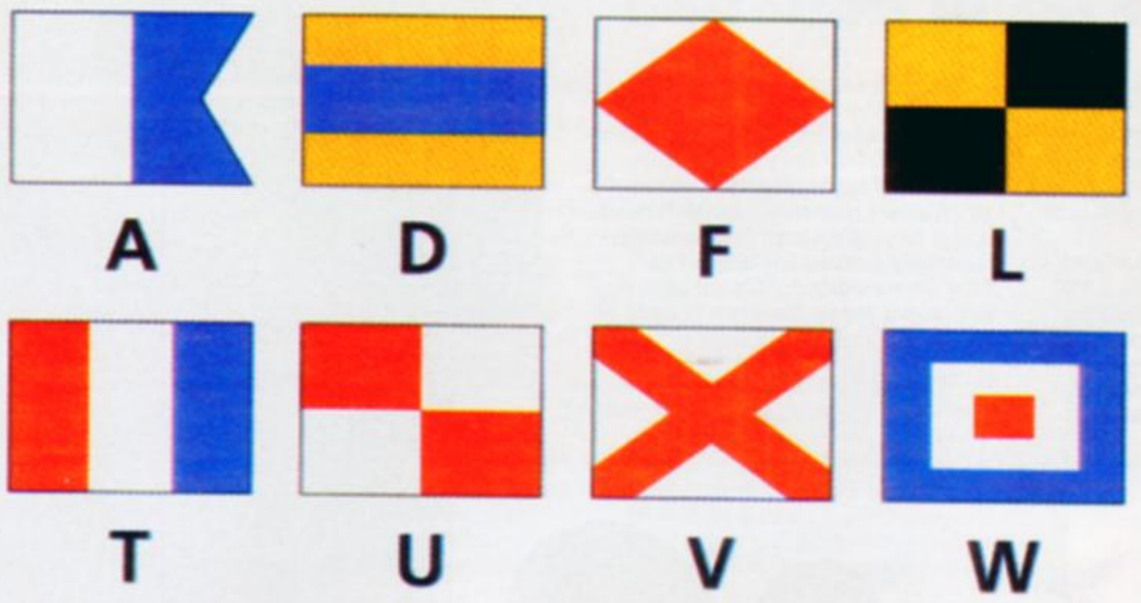
JUST over a million people – 923,000 men and 86,000 women – served in the Royal Navy during World War II.

With the outbreak of war, the Navy needed a massive injection of manpower – and to this end thousands of 'hostilities only' servicemen and women were recruited.

These inexperienced recruits would serve only for the duration of the war in Britain's first real citizen navy. Many had never been to sea before; some could not even swim.

All over Britain, in former Butlins holiday camps, hotels, schools and factories, these new recruits were rapidly trained in the Navy's different specialisations, including engineering, gunnery and flying, as well as the basics of seamanship and naval discipline.

Using eyewitness accounts and previously unpublished research, in Hostilities Only – Training the Wartime Royal Navy **(National Maritime Museum £14.99) Brian Lavery reveals the sheer scale of this unprecedented operation and recounts the experiences of men and women who were plunged into a challenging and unfamiliar environment.**



INTERNATIONALLY UNDERSTOOD: THE LANGUAGE OF FLAGS

COMMUNICATION between vessels nowadays is usually carried out by radio, but code signals may also be sent by flag, light or sound. Single letter signals are perhaps the most important code signals and are understood internationally. Each letter of the alphabet except R is a complete message when sent individually. How many do you know? (Answers below) – From the 4th edition of Reed's Skipper's Handbook for Sail and Power **by Malcolm Pearson (Adlard Coles Nautical £7.99)**

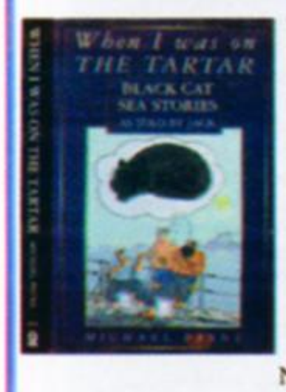
A I have a diver down. Keep clear. D Keep clear. Manoeuvring with difficulty. F I am disabled. Communicate with me. L You should stop your vessel instantly. T Keep clear – Pair trawling. U You are running into danger. V I require assistance. W I require medical assistance.

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THE ONE AND ONLY



THE ONLY aircraft actually built by the Royal Navy is the still surviving Mitchell-Proctor Kittiwake XW784('-/LS') seen at the Lee-on-Solent Air Day, July 24 1971. It was constructed by RN apprentices at RNAS Arbroath with final completion at Lee, and is powered by a 100hp Rolls Royce Continental 0-200-A engine.

Career details are included with those of all Fleet Air Arm Fixed-Wing Aircraft Since 1946, **the definitive guide assembled by Ray Sturtivant with Mick Burrow and Lee Howard, available to Air-Britain members at £32.50 (£48 to non - members) from Air-Britain (Historians) Ltd, 41 Penshurst Rd, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8HL**

Honours list long overdue

AT LAST a complete listing of ships awarded Battle Honours has been compiled and published under the official sponsorship of the Naval Historical Branch.

For **Battle Honours of the Royal Navy** (Maritime Books £19.95) Ben Warlow has provided a complete list of those actions considered worthy of this recognition, together with the names of those HM ships awarded it.

Also listed are the Fleet Air Arm squadrons, the ships of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and, where applicable, the names of merchant ships awarded an Honour.

The detailed philosophy of the awards is included together with explanatory notes.

The only previous official publication was in 1954 and was limited to the honours awarded to ships and squadrons then extant.

So this book will become a major reference book and source document for historians and researchers – and for *Navy News*.

Private journal reveals real life Jack Aubrey

BASED on the previously unpublished private journal of Capt Graham Moore, Tom Wareham's study of the experiences of a **Frigate Commander** (Pen & Sword £19.99) provides a real life model for Patrick O'Brien's Jack Aubrey.

Moore was one of the 'star captains' who served continuously as a frigate commander from 1793-1804.

His early career took him to Newfoundland and he later served with Sir William Sidney Smith's squadron operating off the north coast of France.

He was present during the Naval mutiny at Spithead and helped to destroy the French fleet off Ireland in 1798.

His most famous action was in September 1804 when his squadron captured a Spanish frigate squadron carrying a fortune in treasure.



● *Capt Graham Moore*

Bismarck's Oscar had nine lives

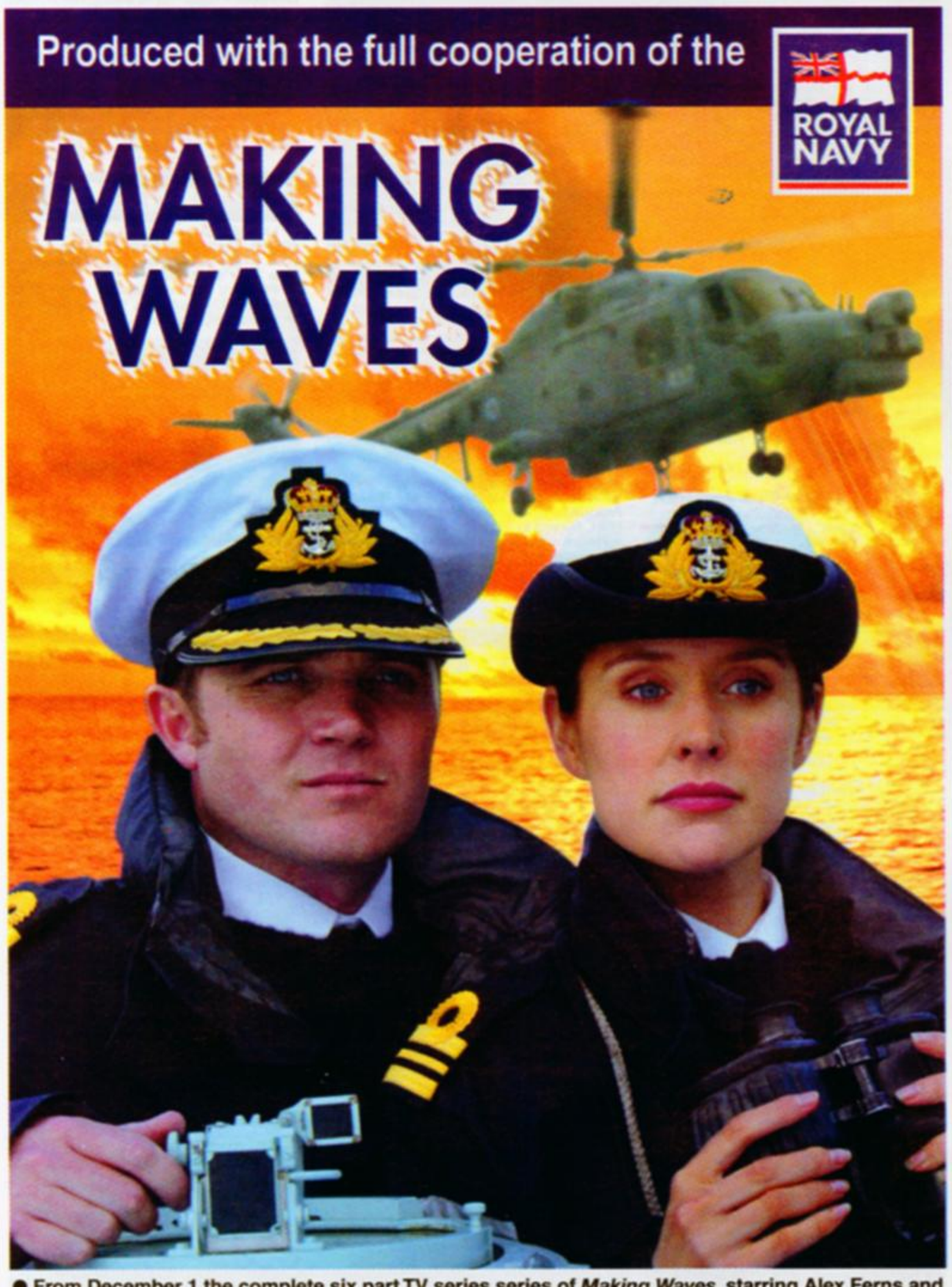


OSCAR, cat mascot of the Bismarck, survived the sinking of the battleship in 1941 and was rescued by HMS Cossack.

When Cossack herself sank in October that year, Oscar was transferred to the carrier Ark Royal. After she was torpedoed, Oscar was once again rescued, picked up from a floating plank, and spent the rest of his nine lives in a Sailors' Home.

His portrait by Georgina Shaw Baker, who painted many animals that distinguished themselves in both world wars, is included in Animals at Sea, **a charming little book by Liza Verity published by the National Maritime Museum at £9.99.**

Produced with the full cooperation of the ROYAL NAVY



● From December 1 the complete six part TV series series of *Making Waves*, starring Alex Ferns and Emily Hamilton, is available exclusively on DVD from *Navy News* at £7.99 inc pp UK (£9.99 overseas). £1 from each copy sold will be donated to King George's Fund for Sailors. To order online simply log on to www.navynews.co.uk and order from our secure online catalogue. To order by telephone and to obtain a full catalogue phone 023 9282 6040. Or write to The Business Manager, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Queen Street, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH. Cheques payable to Navy News to accompany orders. For orders outside the UK payment can be made by Cheque/International Money Order in £ Sterling and drawn on UK bank. Or for payment by Credit Card/Switch, UK & Abroad, please use the coupon on page 4. Allow 28 days for delivery.

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● *Type 42 destroyer HMS Glasgow enters her home port of Portsmouth for the last time before decommissioning early next year*

Glasgow gals say goodbye

THE GLASGOW branch of the Association of Wrens made a special effort to bid farewell to Type 42 destroyer HMS Glasgow during her last visit to her namesake city.

The ship's female officers and ratings hosted their antecedents from the service during the week-long visit to the Scottish city.

Commanding officer, Cdr Mike Wainhouse, said: "How apt it was that our last port visit as a serving warship should have been to Glasgow.

"We are extremely proud of the links we have developed with our affiliated city and which we have underlined this week. I am sure that the Royal Navy will continue to maintain strong links with the city and I hope that Glasgow will continue to support the Royal Navy.

"The two have very close connections built over many generations."

2005 will see the final decommissioning of the three destroyers, HMS Glasgow, Newcastle and Cardiff, all of whom step aside to make space for the future Type 45 destroyers.

Dog double at Devonport

The MOD Police Devonport and Dartmouth Dog Units have increased their canine numbers by two with the arrival of German Shepherd puppies Lilly and Murphy.

The two pups, both 10 months old, were donated to the unit and are slowly being taught their trade.

The two are part of national MOD Police puppy programme.

NoticeBoard

Calling all associations: Here at *Navy News* we are keen to make sure that all our association details are up to date so that we can offer the best service to our readers. Please could you send either a letter or an email to us with all your association details: contact names; telephone numbers; email addresses; or websites. In addition, we intend to offer a detailed directory on our website *Navy News Online*, so please let us know which, if any, of your association details can be made available online. Details must be received in writing to: Association Directory, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH or email: *edit@navynews.co.uk*

Deaths

WO2(MEA) Dave 'Jacko' Jackson. HMS Sultan. Joined Navy as an Artificer Apprentice in the late 1970s at HMS Fisgard, and continued training at Caledonia. Served in a variety of ships, towards the latter stages of well-respected career specialised in minor war vessels. Ships included Fearless, Inverness, Cromer and Somerset. His last job was in the Forward Support Unit of Superintendent Fleet Maintenance, and served in FSU01 during Gulf War II. October 9.

Surg Cdre Geoffrey W. Myers. Joined the Navy as a cadet in 1968, and became a Surg Lt (Dentist) in 1970. Early career included time at sea in HMS Bulwark, and a range of shore clinics. In 1980 achieved as MSc in Advanced Conservative Dentistry. Exchange to the US 1984-86. Received an OBE for his role in the medical organisation including the planning and arrangements for the Primary Casualty Reception Ship RFA Argus. Deputy Director Naval Dental Service, and early participation in the creation of the Defence Dental Agency in 1996, later Deputy Director Plans and Resources, then DD Clinical Services within DDA. Direct RN Dental Services in 2001, also Director of Clinical Services in HQ of DDA. Directory Policy and Plans and Chief of Staff in 2003. October 17.

Lt Cdr Pat T. Broster. Serving at MOD Whitehall as a mission planner. Previously served on the staff of FOSM, JARIC, was officer in charge of the Royal Navy Targetting Cell. Served with Canberra aircraft on exchange with the RAF as a Navigator. Initially began his career as a Sea King Observer. Joined service at Dartmouth in April 1982, and previously served in the Merchant Navy. Aged 43. October 19.

CPO(AWT) Mark Simmons. HMS Explorer. During his career, he served at various Royal Naval establishments at home and abroad, and in the ships Bristol, Victory, Liverpool, RFA Argus (during 1990-91 Gulf War), Gloucester, Glasgow (seeing operational service in Sierra Leone) and finally in Archer-class HMS Explorer with the Yorkshire Universities Royal Naval Unit. A keep sportsman, one of his career highpoints was between 1993-96 when he served in Gibraltar and captained the Gibraltar Regiment rugby team, and represented the Gibraltar Combined Services and Gibraltar Presidents XV. October 31.

Rct Richard Carl Campbell-Smith RM. Commando Training Centre RM. Member of 876 Troop, Portsmouth Company. Completed 22 weeks of training. Aged 18. November 2.

Colin Hall. Leading Seaman. Served in HMS Ulster, Opportune, Rapid, Vernon, Foulness, Loch Glendhu, Victory and Ceylon. HMS Bruce Association. Aged 72. October 25.

Sam 'Roy' Sharratt. AB. Served in St Kitts and Camperdown. Aged 70. November 4.

Bert Wynn. AB. World War II veteran. Survivor of Repulse and Dorsetshire. Former member of Dearne Valley RNA. Aged 83. October 21.

Michael 'Mick' Corbett. COA. Served 1942-56. Ships include Drake, Illustrious, Vanguard, Consort, Tamar, Reserve Fleet. HMS Consort Association. October.

Robert Hope. AB Sailmaker. HMS Glasgow Association, served in ship 1948-50. Aged 76. October 31 in Vancouver, Canada.

David 'Dave' Dunne. Joined Fleet Air Arm at Collingwood in 1955 as an electrician, and served 27 years, ships included Bulwark, Centaur, Hermes and Ark Royal, and finished career at Daedalus in 1982 as a Fleet Chief. Aged 67. October.

Fred 'Cocky' Ashbolt. PO. Joined Ganges as a Boy Seaman. Ships included Gannet, Vindictive, Walker, Offa. Aged 97. October 21.

Dennis Beazley. CPO Caterer. Served in Glasgow, Agincourt and Simbang, Singapore. October 17.

Thomas Fox Tominey. CPOMA. Ships included Abdiel, Bulwark, Ulster and Coventry. June 12.

R.C. 'Richard' Carline DSM. EA. Submariners Association, Portsmouth branch. Submarine service 1939-44 in Sealion and Truculent. Aged 92.

Dennis 'Burt' Lancaster. Stoker 1. Submariners Association, London branch. Served in submarines 1949-53 in Tradewind and Andrew. Aged 76.

J.E.O. 'Joe' Williams. Sig T/O. Submariners Association, Australia and Welsh branches. Submarine service 1944-46 in Virtue, Untiring, and U3515. Aged 80.

J. 'Joe' Tyler. AB HSD. Submariners Association, Merseyside branch. Submarine service 1944-48 in Unruly, Seraph, and Truncheon. Aged 79.

William 'Bill' Upson. Ships included Theseus in Korea (1950-51) as a signalman and Yeoman at HMS Terror in Singapore (1955-57). In service from 1948-57, then served with Thames Water Authority Police. Aged 76. October 13.

W.R.T. Venton. Amethyst Association. Survivor of the Yangtze Incident in April 1949. Aged 91. September.

Alan Michael Gordge. Joined Fleet Air Arm in 1955, left service in 1967 as a Petty Officer. Resident of the Star and Garter Home since 2003. Fleet Air Arm Association, Hanworth branch. October 20.

Robert 'Bobby' Elliott. PO ERA. Served 1942-46. Ships included Artifex and Pioneer, British Pacific Fleet, East Indies Fleet. Aged 81. October 13.

Frank Davis. CPO. Served 1937-62. HMS St Brides Bay Association, served in ship as Buffer 1960-61. Ships include St Vincent, Ramilies, Victory, Saunders, Dauntless, Bruce, Boxer, Indomitable, Warrior. Awarded 1939-45 Star, Atlantic Star, Africa Star, Italy Star, War Medal and LSGC. Aged 82.

James E. Wyatt. POME. Served in 1950s and 60s. Ships included Raleigh, Bulwark, Eagle, Concord, Tyne, Crane, Dampier. November 2 in Bali, Indonesia.

Ken Tuck. HMS Crane Association, 1943-46.

Arther 'Jan' Pope. HMS Crane Association, 1951-53.

Roger 'Joe' Folkes. HMS Crane Association, 1952-55.

Ivor Rodway. HMS Crane Association, 1953-55.

Tony 'Pincher' Martin. HMS Crane Association, 1960-62.

Roy 'Bungy' Williams. A/POElect. Ships included Newcastle, Theseus, Collingwood. HMS Newcastle and HMS Theseus Associations. July.

Majorie Spencer née Emslie. Joined RN as a Wren in 1918, served as stewardess in HMS Excellent, Whale Island. Believed to have been Britain's oldest WWI Wren. Aged 104. October 6.

Albert Harry 'Robbie' Robinson. Petty Officer. Joined the Royal Navy aged 16 as a Boy Seaman in 1938 after completing his training at HMS Ganges. Served in HMS Penelope (Pepperpot) 1939-42 in the battles of Narvik, Malta Convoys, Mediterranean Fleet and Anzio. Other ships include Hawkins, Kimberley, Raleigh and Vengeance. HMS Penelope Association, HMS Ganges Association, George Cross Island Association. Aged 82. September 1.

George Henry Harrington. Torpedo Man and Ship's Diver. Served 1942-46. Ships included Argonaut and Marne. Served in Arctic, Mediterranean, D Day and Pacific. Aged 79. October 12.

Edward Moss. CA(Phot). Served 1947-69. Ships included Ark Royal and Albion, and airstations Heron, Falcon, Peregrine, Fulmar, Seahawk, and Osprey, and shore establishments Ricasoli and Excellent. Fleet Air Arm Association, Angus branch.

John Hallam. Algerines Association, served in Marvel. October 9.

G.W. Brockless. Algerines Association, served in Magicienne. October 18.

Bernard Walsh. Algerines Association, served in Polaris. October 20.

Stanley J. Strange. Algerines Association, served in Hydra.

Thomas Jeff Knight. Algerines Association, served in Felicity. October 27.

George W. Wade. Algerines Association, served in Cheerful. October 28.

John E. Dodds: Algerines Association, served in Mariner. November.

John Barker. Mne Driver. Served from 1973 with 42 Commando, attached to DNR as a driver. Killed in Iraq while working as a security guard by a suicide blast near Baghdad Airport. Aged 49.

Harold Calow. AB. Served in Khedive among other ships during World War II.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS

Maj P. Baxter RM.

Lt M. Bond. Served Concord, Vernon, Aisne, Mull of Kintyre and Bellerophon.

Lt Cdr S.F.N. Holloway. Served Sultan, Heron, Osprey, and Nato.

Cdr K.M.E. Mackay VRD RNR.**

Capt A.W. Morris RM. Served Ukussa.

Maj D.C. Pope RM. Served Cumberland and Royalist.

Lt Cdr A.C. Reeves RNR.

Lt Cdr D.J.C. Smith VRD RNR.** Served Dalhousie, Victory, Perseus, Tintagel Castle and Orion.

Lt Cdr J.W. Wickham. Served Tamar, Glory, Gannet and Seahawk.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Robert John 'Robbie' Holmes. Limavady, founder member. Burma Star. Served 1943-56 in Cockade, Flatholm and MLs. Aged 83. October 22.

William 'Willie' Canning. Limavady, founder member. Served 1934-38 on China Station. Aged 89. November 1.

Harry Douglas. South Liverpool. PO Stoker. Served throughout WWII in destroyers. Aged 84. November 6.

Glanffrwd Jones. Harlow. Served 1943-46. September.

Henry 'Harry' Roberts. Harlow. Served 1943-46. October 15.

Raymond Williams. Wakefield, former vice-chairman. Russian Convoy Veterans Association. Served in Merchant Navy and RNR. Served in SS Nigaristan (one of three survivors rescued by USS Eberle), SS Venus, Manchester Port, Antares, Andes, Dunstar Grange, City of Chester, Atlantis and HMS Kelvin and Ubiquity. Awarded 1939-45 Star, Atlantic Star, Burma Star, 1939-45 War Medal and Defence Medal. Aged 80. September 23.

Marshall Dellar. Henlow. Served 1942-46 in Dolphin, Sheffield and submarines. Also served 33 years in RNR, 20 as a CPO. Aged 80. September 27.

Doug Saunders. Henlow. Joined Royal Marines 1942-46. Served in HMS Gambia, and stayed as RM crew when ship transferred to HMNZN and attended surrender of Japan in Tokyo. HMS Gambia Association. Aged 79. October 5.

Ray Bealing. Worthing, vice president. September 9.

May Burns. Littlehampton. September 11.

Mervyn Bond. Littlehampton. October 7.

James Rimmer. Runcorn; formerly secretary and treasurer for Widnes RNA.. Leading Stoker Mech. Ships included Raleigh, Pembroke, Badger (Shearwater), Copra, Bhaganza (BEOP2). Aged 84.

Roland Derek Murphy. Scarborough, member since foundation. Served in RN 1948-56. Aged 74. October 8.

Jack Surridge DSM. South Bristol. PO Electrician. Ships included Ganges, Valiant, Ramillies, Encounter, Havock, Naval Party 1730 in 1st Battle of Narvic, 2nd Battle of Narvic, 2nd Battle of Sirtes, Battles of Crete, Matapan, Tobruk and Malta Convoys. HMS Ganges Association. November 3.

Kevin Maher. Oldham. AB. Served in Ariadne 1943-44. Chairman of the Northern Section of the Fast Minelayers Association. Aged 79. November 7.

Trevor Creasey. Worthing. October 22.

John 'Jack' Lindop. North Reddish, founder member, branch secretary for over 20 years. Served 1939-45. Aged 86.

Jack Williams. North Reddish, associate. Served in Army. Korean veteran. Aged 75.

Sports lottery

October 16: £5,000 – **WEA M. Hughes**, Liverpool; £1,500 – **Lt S. Vorley**, Heron; £500 – **MEM S. Partis**, Invincible

October 23: £5,000 – **POStd W. Ellis**, Norfolk; £1,500 – **OM P. Emanuel**, Tyne; £500 – **Mne K. Hepple**, FPGRM

October 28: £5,000 – **CSgt M. Isaacs**, CTCRM; £1,500 – **LAEM L. Young**, Heron; £500 – **CPOMEA C. Hurston**, Cumberland

November 6: £5,000 – **2Lt B. Gaffney**, 40 Cdo RM; £1,500 – **AEM B. Smith**, 846 NAS; £500 – **LWtr P. Walsh**, CTCRM

Swap drafts

LMEM Eastwood. Contact: 07971 405136. Draft: HMS Nottingham on April 1, 2005. Will swap for: any Portsmouth-based Type 23 or small ship.

POWtr V. Norton. Contact: 94651 3577. Draft: MCTC Colchester. Will consider: any shore base POWtr job.

Ratings seeking to swap drafts must meet the requirements of BR14, article 0506. In particular, they should be on or due the same king of service – sea or shore; have time to serve in their current draft; be the same rate; and be of similar experience. All applications must be made on a Form C240. Forms for ratings within a Squad should be sent to their Waterfront Manning Office; forms for all others should be sent to NDD, Centurion Building.

Entries for next month's Noticeboard must be received before December 10

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THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the December headlines of past decades...

40 years ago

Oberon-class submarine HMS Odin made Silent Service history when she became the first boat to sail through the Straits of Magellan, 100 miles north of Cape Horn. Odin's passage took her through narrow channels surrounded by "lofty white mountains". The submarine was accompanying a squadron led by HMS Tiger on a goodwill tour of South America under the command of Vice Admiral Sir Fitzroy Talbot, C-in-C South America and South Atlantic.

30 years ago

Parking spaces – or lack thereof – were proving to be a major bugbear for personnel in Devonport, especially those going on deployment, leaving their cars behind on the base. Just four spaces were allocated for Leander-class frigates (complement 250) and 15 for HMS Ark Royal (complement 2,600), prompting Devonport personnel to urge the base's leaders to build a multi-storey car park.

20 years ago

The third of the RN's trio of aircraft carriers HMS Ark Royal began builder's sea trials around the UK, fresh out of Swan Hunter's yard. Shipbuilders, contractors and a large media party joined Ark for the 3,000 miles of trials, while the hangar deck was given over to sporting activities with table tennis, football and hockey – and a sods' opera – replacing the more usual carrier fare.



● *Oberon-class submarine HMS Odin*

Richmond takes the weather with her



SAILORS in frigate HMS Richmond are obviously fans of rock band Crowded House . . . everywhere they go they seem to take the weather with them.

The hurricane-busters arrived in the Caribbean island of St Vincent to help inhabitants celebrate 25 years of independence, only to find ominous skies dominating the island.

The sailors formed up in a cricket stadium to be inspected by the Governor General Sir Frederick Ballantyne, who also took the salute from a Colour party marching past a dais.

Besides performing official duties, Richmond's crew headed over to the leeward side of St Vincent to what was the set for the Hollywood blockbuster *Pirates of the Caribbean.*

"Although some time has passed since the filming, some of the stages and buildings remain and the area is unusually free of any commercial activity to capitalise on the attraction," said the frigate's weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Rob Fulford.

"Such was the success of the film – and the setting – that the island expects to welcome back the crew for the sequel in the near future.

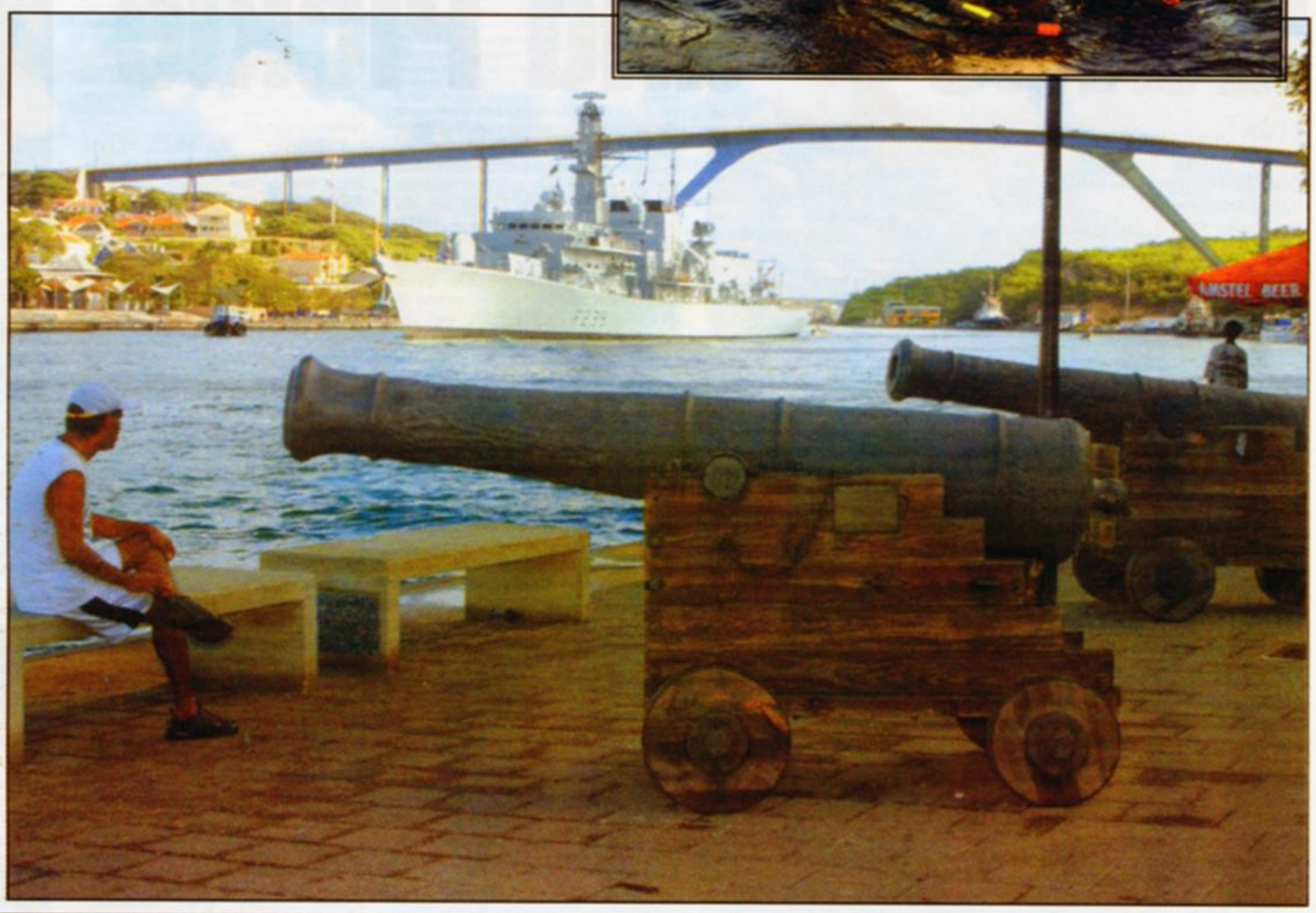
"Our stay was punctuated by frequent showers – dispelling the myth that it is always hot and sunny in the Caribbean."

Likewise another port of call, Curacao, lived up to its name as one of the Windward Islands – although the stiff but pleasant breeze helped make the heat of the day a little less intense.

Richmond arrived at Curacao, otherwise known as the Dutch Antilles (the advert for Amstel beer is a dead giveaway) for a break from sustained periods of counter drug patrols.

The spell alongside gave the ship's divers a good training opportunity in a fairly concentrated programme while the leisure facilities on the island gave the many sports divers on the ship the chance to explore reefs and feed sharks in a controlled environment

HMS Richmond hit the headlines in September as the first relief effort on the scene (with accompanying tanker RFA Wave Ruler) in Grenada and Grand Cayman after Hurricane Ivan devastatingly swept through the islands. She returns to Portsmouth this month.

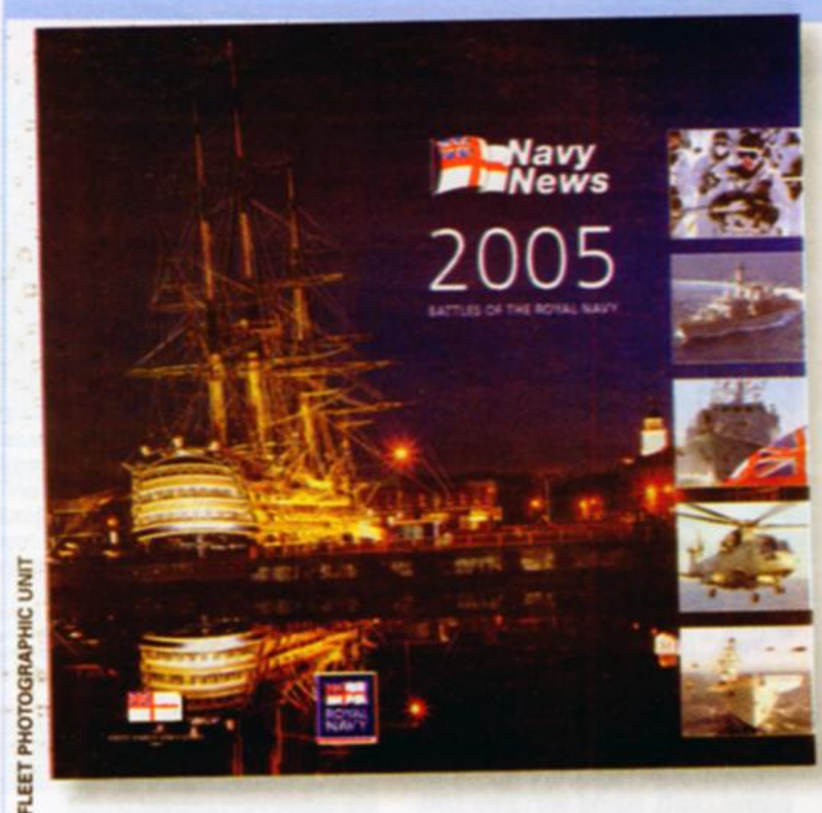


● *HMS Richmond arrives in Curacao for some serious (inset) and not so serious diving*

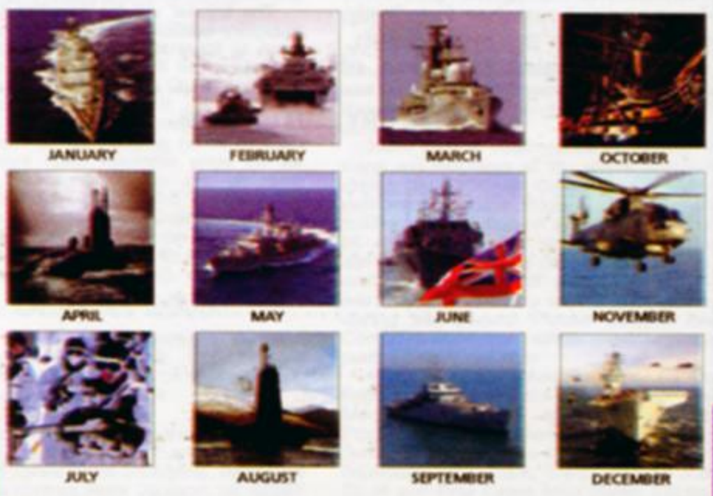
Navy News

CALENDAR 2005

Battles of the Royal Navy



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In order to commemorate the bicentenary of The Battle of Trafalgar, the theme for the 2005 calendar is Battles of the Royal Navy, featuring 12 battles from the 18th to the 20th centuries and the ships and units involved.

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Navy News ROYAL NAVY

Royal Naval Association

Hearty appetite for battle – and Pickle



● *Aquitaine branch hosted Association president Vice Admiral John McAnally (centre) at their Trafalgar lunch in France*

IN AN atmosphere as 'cordiale' as an embrace, the **Aquitaine** branch hosted a luncheon, presided over by chairman S/M Ken Napier, to celebrate the anniversary of Trafalgar.

The Association's president, Vice Admiral John McAnally, with Vice Admiral Dambeur of the French Navy and more than 80 shipmates representing RNA branches and those of the French equivalent – AMMAC – thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

A superb speech, delivered by Monsieur H. Lacheze – in flawless English – revealed some interesting facts about the huge French first-rate ship L'Orient, which blew up at the Battle of the Nile, and the legend surrounding the 11-year-old French boy who 'stood on the burning deck.'

Wood salvaged from the wreckage of L'Orient, presented to Nelson by the captain of the Swiftsure, was made into a coffin, which was used for Nelson's burial in St Paul's Cathedral.

Sailors who served with Nelson in his battles and who were buried originally in the grounds of Greenwich Hospital, were commemorated by the **Greenwich** branch at their Trafalgar Day service and parade.

Their remains were re-interred in the grounds known as The Pleasance in Greenwich in 1875, and wreaths were laid at the Memorial Tablet erected in their honour.

The wreath-laying ceremony was attended by the Mayor, Cllr Brian O'Sullivan, and his wife, members of the Royal British Legion and the Merchant Navy Veterans Association, as well as members of the branch.

Afterwards, Greenwich councillors laid on a buffet with drinks for association shipmates, which was much appreciated.

A dinner/dance was the choice of the **Burgess Hill** branch to celebrate Nelson's victory.

Following the toast to the Immortal Memory, proposed by S/M John Mead, the branch chaplain, Andrew Fairchild, gave an amusing account of his early life in Liverpool and the celebrities he mingled with.

To the regret of members he is leaving the branch for pastures new.

The evening ended with a dance to music by the popular duo 'Just We Two.'

"A very special lady" was the Guest of Honour at the **York** branch Trafalgar Dinner – Commodore Annette Picton, the senior female serving officer in the Navy.

The occasion was enjoyed by all, as was the re-enactment of Nelson's death on the Victory, performed by S/M Mike Farrington.

As a memento of the occasion, Cdre Picton was presented with an engraved crystal and a copy of the World War II poems of S/M Bernard Hallas before she left.

The **Port Elizabeth** branch celebratory lunch in St George's Club, enjoyed by 20 members, held a surprise for chairman S/M Derrick Johnson.

In recognition of his 20 years service in the chair, he was presented with a citation, and was so overcome, he almost wept.

What aroused great interest and discussion at the **Bexhill-on-Sea** branch was not the menu of roast beef and trimmings, but the grim rations seamen serving under Nelson were expected to live on for a week – these were detailed on the branch souvenir programme.

In the past year, members have raised £2,050 for naval charities.

The upper lounge of the Royal British Legion was packed to capacity for the annual celebration hosted by the **Redruth and Camborne** branch.

The guest of honour was Cdr Stanton of RNAS Culdrose, who was accompanied by his wife Dawn.

Enjoying the merriment and laughter the occasion inspired were members of the **Penzance**, **Falmouth**, **St Austell** and **Helston** branches, the Ganges Association, the Merchant Navy and members of the WOs' and CPOs' Mess Culdrose, as well as the president and chairman of Redruth Royal British Legion.

There was a super raffle and prizes galore – and Cornish pasties on the supper menu.

The Association president, Vice Admiral John McAnally, guest of honour at the **Inverness** celebratory dinner, was joined by the Captain and Officers of HMS Inverness on their last visit to their adopted city before the ship decommissions.

Though it was an occasion for toasts and good fellowship, members of the branch could not conceal their sadness at the loss of 'their' ship.

Sir Teddy Taylor MP, who has accepted the title of Patron of the **Southend-on-Sea** branch, was presented with his RNA tie and badge at the branch Trafalgar Dinner celebrations.

Waterlooville branch held its first Pickle Night on November 11, at which the function room had been transformed to replicate the lower gun deck of the armed schooner HMS Pickle, which brought the news of victory at Trafalgar – and the death of Nelson – back to Britain.

Branch president Commodore Morton was guest of honour, and all 43 members present received a tot, during which a visual display of the battle was presented.

Each table represented a gun, with members detailed off to a gun crew, complete with gun captain, mess cook and beer bosun, who helped dish out the food and drinks.

A £1 fine (more if the case was argued) was introduced for misdemeanours, which raised more than £180 for charity.

Naval Quirks





Deeside push out the boat for party

THEY pushed out the boat to mark the 50th anniversary of the commissioning of the **Deeside** branch, which, coming as it did on the heels of the 199th anniversary of Trafalgar, was a bumper celebration.

It kicked off on the evening of Saturday October 23 in the Admiral Sir David Luce lounge of the Deeside Naval Club, at Connahs Quay, which was packed to capacity.

The guests included Mark Tami, MP for Alyn and Deeside, and Carl Seargeant, of the Welsh Assembly, who were joined by members of the Russian Convoy Club, the Royal British Legion, the Royal Air Force Association, Coastal Forces and members of the Merchant Navy.

There was a thanksgiving service the following day in St Mark's Church, conducted by the Rev Paul Varah, the branch chaplain, following which all adjourned to the Naval Club for 'a feast' prepared by stewardess Mrs A. Davies.

The branch was presented with its 50th Golden Certificate by S/M C. Hutton, secretary No 10 Area, and in the absence of the branch chairman S/M F. Bookin proposed the Toast.

A thank you to all who made the occasion such a success and to No 10 Area for their generous donation of Tots.

Themed menu

LEICESTER branch celebrated Trafalgar Day with a themed dinner and dance, when the function room at the Coach and Horses Inn was decorated with flags and ensigns.

Staff in period costume served an "excellent" meal, including Villeneuve thick country broth and Battle of Trafalgar beef in a red wine sauce.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



The mystery ship in our October edition was the destroyer HMS Jutland, originally due to be known as HMS Malplaquet.

The winner was Mr D. Taylor, of Colchester, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's mystery ship was powered by diesel oil, though judging by her name you could be forgiven for thinking she used a different fuel.

Correctly identifying this patrol craft could win you £50. Her pennant number has been removed from the photograph.

And apologies to those of you who served in HMS Leeds Castle after 1948 – she was scrapped ten years later, contrary to our comments in last month's solution. Hand on heart – it was a dodgy entry in one of our reference books!

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is January 10. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our February edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 118

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

My answer: .....

Royal Naval Association

Money is in bank for anniversary

WITH money in the bank, **Bradford** branch has plans made to celebrate its 70th anniversary on September 11, 2005.

Following the dedication of their new standard in Bradford Cathedral, there will be a parade to Centenary Square, where the salute will be taken by the Lord Mayor and the president of No 11 Area.

Refreshments will then be provided in the City Hall.

Fundraising by the branch, an award of £2,500 from the 'Awards for All' section of the National Lottery, plus £350 from Shell Tankers UK Community Scheme, will help meet the expenses, including the cost of the Harrogate Sea Cadet Band which will lead the march-past.

It is thanks to branch secretary S/M Bill Lee who, when serving in the Merchant Navy, worked for Shell Tankers UK, that the £350 from their Community scheme – set up to help ex-employees in charitable organisations and working in the community – was granted.

Flag day nets £3,214 total

THE **SOUTHEND-on-Sea** branch annual flag day collection raised £3,214, for which the committee thanks shipmates, especially S/M Chick Fowler, who organised the event.

The branch's annual Pearl Harbour parade and service of remembrance will take place on December 5, and those wishing to attend with or without their standards should contact the branch secretary, S/M Norman Summerhayes, on 01702 612255 (office) or 01702 465052 (office)

Joel enjoys extended birthday

ON ACHIEVING his 100th birthday in October, former submariner S/M Joel Blamey, of **Newton Abbot** branch, embarked on a hectic round of celebrations.

Among the pile of invitations and greetings awaiting him on the birthday morning was one from the Queen, which pleased and honoured S/M Joe so much that he promptly sent her a letter of thanks and a copy of his book *A Submariner's Story*.

S/M Joel joined the Royal Navy in 1920, was conscripted into submarines in 1926 and spent the next 28 years in boats, his wartime service winning him the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal.

His 100th birthday celebrations stretched over rather more than a day – for a period of around three weeks, Joel was in great demand, beginning with a sumptuous family lunch in the Grange restaurant at Buckfast Abbey, followed soon afterwards by a mega birthday party given in his honour by parishioners at the Highweek village hall.

He attended numerous lunches, including one hosted by the Newton Abbot branch, the Exeter branch of the Submarine Association, then a musical concert, and a visit to HMS Dolphin in Gosport, spiritual home of the Silent Service, where he was wined and dined by the Submarine Officers Association.

Believed to be the oldest ex submariner in the country, perhaps it was concern for S/M Joel's wellbeing that prompted his fellow shipmates of the Newton Abbot branch to give him a wooden garden bench as a birthday gift.

The gift was presented on behalf of the branch by the chairman of Newton Abbot, S/M John Kiff, with the following appropriate words: "As one old submariner to another, it's been a long, busy and exciting haul, Joe.

"But now things are almost back to sub-normal, we would like you to take a seat."



● *The chairman of Newton Abbot, S/M John Kiff (left), presents a garden bench on behalf of his branch to S/M Joel Blamey*

Officer returns to Chard

A FORMER pupil of Holyrood School returned to **Chard** as guest of the local branch.

Commodore David Pond, Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh, the Royal Navy training establishment at Torpoint in Cornwall, attended the Chard Trafalgar Night dinner.

Raleigh provides both initial training for new ratings, and further specialist training in a number of areas such as seamanship and catering.

Born and bred in Somerset, Cdre Pond left Holyrood School in 1974 for Loughborough University and joined the Navy in 1980 to commence officer training.

A Meteorological and Oceanographic specialist, he has served in a variety of appointments both ashore and at sea, including aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious and the RFA vessels Fort Grange and Olna, and at NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Brussels.

Cdre Pond said: "It's a great honour for me to return to Chard as the guest of the RNA.

"When you join the Navy you join a family – something I always tell my young trainees. The RNA is very much part of that family."

Trouble on the bridge

ON READING about Sqn Cdr Richard Bell-Davies VC in last month's issue of *Navy News*, S/M R. Walker, the Coventry branch secretary, writes to say: "As a signalman of that period on occasions, sharing the bridge with him (in trials and training escort carrier HMS Pretoria Castle 1943-44), I can vouch for him being modest and well-liked.

"I recall vividly, with glances of amusement all around, his struggling attempts to open or close the sliding bridge windows, never asking for help.

"I do not believe anyone present would have dared to offer assistance.

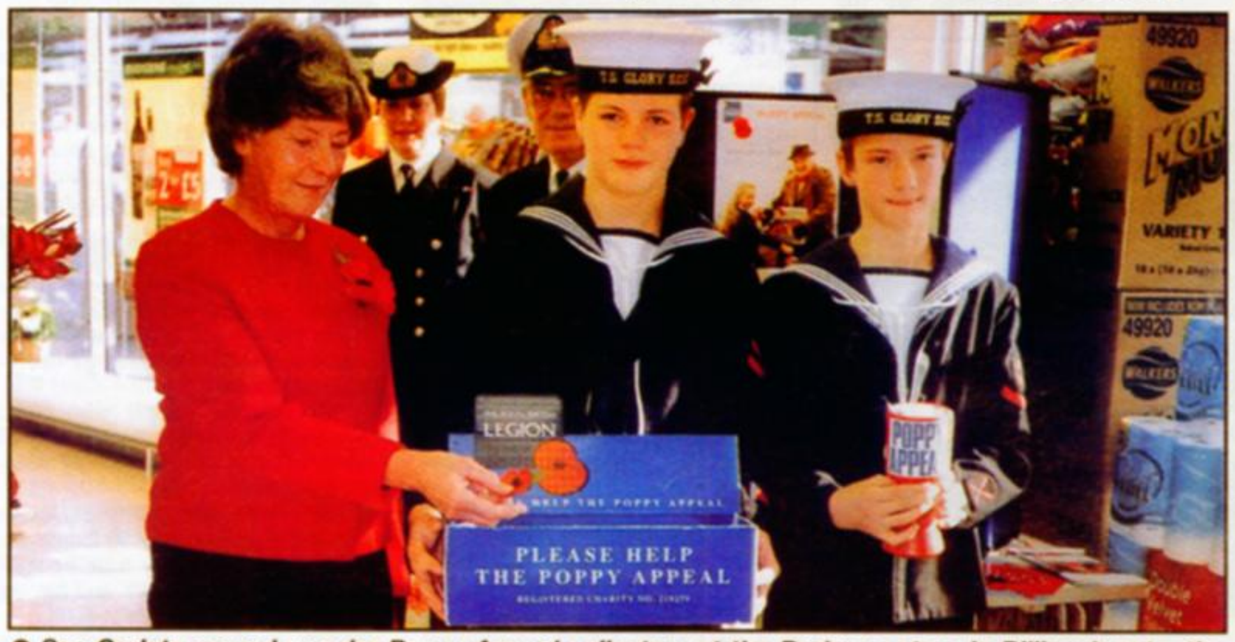
"And there was a broad grin when he finally achieved his task."

S/M Walker goes on to say that the Pretoria Castle boasted another personality – Casper John, who was later to rise to the exalted position of First Sea Lord, was her Commanding Officer for a time, until transferring to the light fleet carrier HMS Ocean in 1945.

Cape Town hosts visit

THE chairman of **Cape Town** branch, S/M Stan Gallon, and a representative from the HMS Ganges Association were present at the reunion of 38 members of the HMS Dorsetshire and HMS Cornwall Associations on their recent visit to Simons Town.

After a short memorial service a tour of the Simons Town dockyard was arranged and a lunch was held at the local museum, hosted by the South African Naval History Trust.



● *Sea Cadets proved popular Poppy Appeal collectors at the Budgens store in Billingshurst – the first tin was filled within three hours. The cadets, from TS Glory in Horsham, were lending a hand under the Billingshurst Royal British Legion policy of encouraging young people to take part in fundraising activities. Pictured with Appeal Organiser Mrs Greta Girli are OC Craig Preston and OC George Phillips*

Church memorial brasses restored



● *S/M Keith Langridge with the memorial brass to Fleet Surgeon Walter Bearblock at Hornchurch*

FOUR memorial brasses were rededicated at St Andrew's Church at Hornchurch on Remembrance Sunday.

Romford and Hornchurch branch member Keith Langridge discovered the brasses while visiting the church in May 2001 – the brasses were in a poor condition as they had been removed during building work years before.

As Keith is also a member of the Essex branch of the Western Front Association, he persuaded them to take on the project, to which they contributed £300.

Other donations, including those from the local RNA branch Double Seven committee, the Hornchurch Royal British Legion, the Friends of War Memorials and the Monumental Brass Society, made up the £1,650 required.

The brasses restored commemorate Fleet Surgeon Walter Bearblock (died in HMS Invincible at Jutland in 1916), his nephew Lt Charles Bearblock (Essex Regt, died at Loos in 1915), 2nd Lt George Franklyn (London Regt, died at Messines 1917) and Pte Frederick Chester (died of dysentery, Pretoria 1900).

All four had links with the Hornchurch area, though the Bearblocks were born in Devon, and relatives of Franklyn and Chester attended the rededication ceremony.

Best Wishes at Christmas

A word of thanks to you all for your kind and thoughtful support.

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Cool heads needed to take control



● *The Lynx helicopter of Type 23 frigate HMS Somerset performs a winching exercise – LAEM1 Andy 'Beaker' Watkinson hangs below the aircraft – while on patrol in the Gulf. Such exercises are part of the daily routine of the Aircraft Controller who is attached to the ship's flight*

Picture: LA(PHOT) Emma Somerfield

NAVY personnel chiefs are scanning the horizon for a new generation of aircraft controllers (ACs).

Far more than just seafaring Air Traffic Controllers, ACs are key members of a ship's warfare team, and with the job comes plenty of responsibility for relatively junior sailors.

Mike Gray looks at the Aircraft Control branch

"Tactics is the overriding difference between Aircraft Controllers and Air Traffic Controllers," said Lt Cdr 'Bomber' Brown, the Officer in Charge of the RN School of Aircraft Control (RNSAC) based at RNAS Yeovilton.

"Both are responsible for keeping aircraft apart and safe, but whereas Air Traffic Controllers tend to deal with large amounts of traffic, an Aircraft Controller will have less trade, but is accountable for actively controlling and tasking the aircraft to achieve the objectives of the Command."

One of the primary roles of the AC is in the planning and management of flying programmes, but in times of crisis an AC effectively has his or her finger on the trigger of some impressive hardware, including missiles and torpedoes.

In most cases, the aircraft concerned will be a destroyer or frigate's Lynx or Merlin helicopter, but the training also enables ACs to handle fixed-wing aircraft, such as Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft (MPAs), and to work afloat or ashore.

The AC is thoroughly integrated with the Ship's Flight, to the extent that he or she is attached to the Flight and not the ship's company.

There is much to be considered before an aircraft gets airborne from a ship – the aircrew needs to know the aim of the mission, the weather conditions, other aircraft and ships operating in the area, call-signs and so on. The AC is the link between the Ops Room and the aircraft.

"The principal warfare officer (PWO) very rarely deals directly with the aircraft – it's all routed through the AC," said Lt Cdr Brown.

Other vital AC tasks include the careful monitoring of fuel reserves while the aircraft is airborne, almost acting as an extra member of the air crew.

AC

The AC branch, formed in 1988, is one of a handful in the Navy which has a critical need for new recruits. At the front line it is 38 per cent down on its nominal strength, which means that although the AC branch can fulfil its commitments at sea, its resources are at times severely stretched.

But the high calibre of candidates required means there is no off-the-peg solution – the only way is to fill the six places on each of the four AC courses run each year, and to find 24 suitable candidates, up to 60 volunteers are needed, reflecting the toughness of the selection procedure.

"It is essential we recruit the right characters for this most demanding specialisation," said Lt Cdr Brown. "If an air crew are coming back to the ship in filthy weather, maybe with some form of emergency, they must have complete faith in their AC."

An ability to remain focussed and calm at all times, no matter how much pressure is being applied, is crucial.

The need to swell the AC branch has led to a shake-up in the selection and training procedure, with recruits being fed directly into a tailored training programme in order to ensure Naval air crews get the best possible support.

A series of promotional roadshows is currently being conducted – a visit to Devonport has already taken place, and subsequent visits to Portsmouth and Faslane are planned.

Although the AC specialisation is traditionally and predominantly a sideways-entry branch, a more direct method has also been adopted and is proving to be rather successful.

There has to be an element of cherry-picking – senior officers count on taking up to nine candidates a year on 'special selection' from among the top one per cent of the new OM(W) intake at HMS Raleigh, with suitable individuals being identified and advised of the existence of the branch as soon as they have shown an aptitude in standard RN tests.

Over a course of five days, prospective ACs must pass a grading course, part classroom and part simulator exercises.

A final ATC medical must be successfully carried out before they are accepted – examiners are not looking for the finished item, but those with potential and ambition.

The main training block is an 18-week Leading Aircraft Controllers (LACs) Professional Qualifying Course, split between the RNSAC at Yeovilton and the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood/ Southwick Park, ending with a fortnight at sea putting skills into practice.

The pace of the course is fast, though a "chill-out" week in the middle allows for the students to perhaps take a flight in one of Culdrose's Merlins or the Roborough Grob trainers, to visit the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) base in Devonport and the London Military Air Traffic Control Centre, giving them a wider perspective of aircraft control.

The two-week stint in a frigate or destroyer can be a hurdle: "It is a daunting time for students," said CPO Bob Chapman, the Chief Instructor at the RNSAC.. "It is very difficult and demanding for them. They go from a simulator to a worked-up warship where they are the only new face. They have got to hit the ground running."

The course will teach them to launch and recover aircraft, including emergency procedures, using one-hour slots on sophisticated simulators.

The new ACs will also learn tactical skills, including anti-submarine warfare, which can include work with Nimrods, together with surface search and air picture compilation.

Students are carefully monitored all the way – there are written exams, continuous assessment using simulators, and the hectic pleasures of FOST's Thursday Wars. As such it is a manpower-intensive course – three staff to each student.

Once qualified, LACs go into a 70-strong pool which feeds the seagoing jobs, and the 'can-do' ethos of the branch means a billet is invariably filled by a volunteer.

"It is a branch which is full of self-motivated people – they have all got goals they want to achieve," said CPO Chapman, himself an old and bold AC.

"And unlike a lot of jobs you see it's not mundane and routine. Every day is different – different weather conditions, different areas of operations and so on.

"Most of the people who come here are in their mid-20s, because of the set of skills and the level of maturity required."

The branch is a pretty exclusive club – the people they welcome are variously described by training staff as 'dynamic', 'proactive' and having 'high personal standards'.

Such attributes are vital in the workplace – the Ops Room in a warship, when a relatively junior member of the ship's company (a leading hand, in many cases) will be an integral part of the CO's team, and the CO will at times need to rely heavily on the AC.

"They are classed as a weapons controller – without doubt it's the most responsibility that a killick or LAC will have," said CPO Chapman.

"It's a pressure job, but with it comes a huge amount of job satisfaction and personal responsibility.

"I suppose 80 per cent of it is in the head – the ability to think instantaneously in three dimensions while sticking to operational practices.

"They certainly have to be able to do two things at once, and often three or four things, including planning ahead.

"Multi-tasking is probably the biggest stumbling block – having to listen to the aircraft and the PWO at the same time whilst simultaneously compiling reports. It's not natural – we call it having the third ear."

Promotion prospects within the branch are good – from PO to WO there is a 50 per cent above average promotion prospect.

Anyone interested in trying out for the branch should discuss the issue with their Divisional Officer or Divisional Senior Rate.

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RN pips rest of Whitehall to Apple gong

THE SENIOR Service collected the Green Apple Award for the government department which has done the most in the past 12 months to protect the environment.

Naval leaders demonstrated efforts across the board to be 'green', from initiatives to reduce the use of fossil fuels and purchasing 'green' electricity to using more recycled paper.

Moreover, energy use has been cut by one third – cutting £5m off RN fuel bills, ozone-damaging gases have been banned ashore and at sea and water consumption reduced.

Other projects introduced include solar heating, rainwater collection and 'sunpipes' to use natural light in the interior of buildings.

The Navy's environmental expert Phil Wheaton collected the award from New York and West End stage actress Janie Dee at an event organised on behalf of Trade Secretary Patricia Hewitt.

Mr Wheaton's boss, Cdre Branden Hesselton, said: "Phil has done an outstanding job.

"We all realise that the environment is held in trust for our children and grandchildren. None of us wants to damage that environment and I'm delighted that Phil has spearheaded our efforts to do the most for our natural heritage."

Meanwhile, Service personnel on Cyprus collected the 'Silver Otter' award for their efforts to care for the island's turtle population.

The award has been presented annually since 1991 to the unit which shows the most environmental awareness. Typically, it has gone to projects involving looking after a general area of important wildlife, rather than a specific creature.

Doing the right thing



WITHOUT power and adrift in the southern Arabian Gulf, the crew of mv Virginian called upon frigate HMS Campbeltown for assistance.

Once the cry for help was received, the Type 22 warship dashed to the scene and offered protection for the merchantman, under a US Flag, while her crew recovered from an earlier electrical fire.

After an overnight struggle to fix the damaged switchboard, Virginian again called for help.

A three-strong team from Campbeltown, led by Lt Steve Hearty, spent 12 hours on the stricken vessel, restoring electrical supplies to the drifting ship and providing technical assistance.

Once the ship's systems had been brought back to life, Campbeltown escorted the vessel to a safe port to await permanent repairs.

The frigate is on a three-month deployment to the Middle East and east of Suez on Operation Calash (a low-wheeled carriage with a folding top if you were wondering) – the Senior Service's current input to the wider US-led war on terror, codenamed Operation Enduring Freedom.

Since arriving in theatre, the Devonport-based warship has spent the majority of her time in the Arabian Gulf, under the tactical command of US Naval leaders in the aircraft carrier USS John F Kennedy.

Sailors have checked on the progress and cargoes of more than 2,000 vessels by hailing them, and Campbeltown's boarding party has visited 11 ships as the Allied forces build up a comprehensive picture of shipping in the region.

The Gulf deployment comes on the back of a seven-and-a-half-month tour of duty with NATO's Atlantic task force SNFL ('sniffle'), representing the UK at D-Day 60th commemorations in Caen and partaking in a Joint Maritime Course off Scotland in the summer.

"We are in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing," said CO Capt Bruce Williams.

"Campbeltown has been deployed at the cutting edge for more than a year, working hard but gaining from the satisfaction that we are – and have been – fully engaged in the Navy's operational commitments in regions that matter, and of course we're soaking up the benefits of being in the sun as winter approaches in the UK."

● *Quick lads, it's the taxman... Campbeltown's boarding party practises marksmanship on the frigate's flight deck (above) and (below) the frigate's Lynx returns from another surveillance mission*





● *No messin' about on the river... Delta Company, 40 Cdo, patrols the waterways around the convergence of two great rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates*

Picture: LA(Phot) Andy Hibberd, 40 Cdo

Royals meet 'a people apart'

DELTA Company, 40 Commando, and 539 Assault Squadron RM spent two weeks in a land unchanged for centuries when it patrolled the marshlands of Iraq.

The Maysan Province marshes covering 12,000 square miles of land at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, was once one of the richest ecological areas in the world, as well as being a home to 500,000 people who had lived off the land for five millennia.

The region was decimated by Saddam Hussein's irrigation projects, leaving just 5,000 Marsh Arabs behind trying to preserve their ancient way of life.

Delta Company was sent into the region for a fortnight of patrols on foot and in boats to clamp down on any smuggling as well as a hearts-and-minds drive to get to know the locals.

A report from the company's operations in the marshlands reveals how eye-opening the Royal Marines found the experience.

"It was a chance for the company to see first-hand the havoc caused by Saddam's regime," Delta's round-up of the patrol states.

"It certainly was a surreal landscape: roads on large raised banks, often with arid salt-baked deserts on one side and lush marshes on the other, seeing people living in reed huts as they had for centuries and then catching sight of the occasional air conditioning unit or satellite dish attached to their dwellings."

With the aid of an interpreter, the commandos chatted with the Maysan inhabitants, helped by a local sheik who provided fresh food.

Tackling the smuggling proved difficult, as the marsh dwellers were not convinced the marines were only looking for the big fish; the locals assured the commandos that no contraband was moving in the region.

Delta's medical officer handed out basic medical supplies and advice to some of the poorer villages and overall the two units built up a picture of a people few outside the region have encountered.

"We were greeted warmly on the whole – the Marsh Arabs seem happy at the removal of Saddam, but less forthcoming about who their new leaders might be," the company report records.

"The people seemed content at being left alone, a people apart as they always have been."

■ Stabilising Iraq, page 1

Greece monkeys preserve ship

EXPERTS at the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth are helping to preserve the remnants of an even older wreck than Henry VIII's flagship.

The remains of a 2,500-year-old Greek merchant vessel have been delivered to the laboratories of the museum in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The ship was discovered off Sicily in the late 1980s and is believed to have foundered around 500-480BC.

Items recovered from the merchantman, which was around 60ft long and 20ft wide, include pottery, jars, amphoras and pitchers, plus eight woven baskets which were coated in pitch.

Around 700 timbers and fragments have also been salvaged from the wreck site; the ship lay off Gela in around 18ft of silt.

The artefacts will undergo five years of conservation and end with the vessel being re-assembled in a museum in Gela.

"We could offer the best equipment and expertise to conserve the boat, so it was carefully packed for its long journey north," said Rear Admiral John Lippiett, chief executive of the Mary Rose Trust.

"Securing conservation projects helps us considerably to support the ongoing and critical work of conserving the hull and collection of the Mary Rose."

Attachés drop by

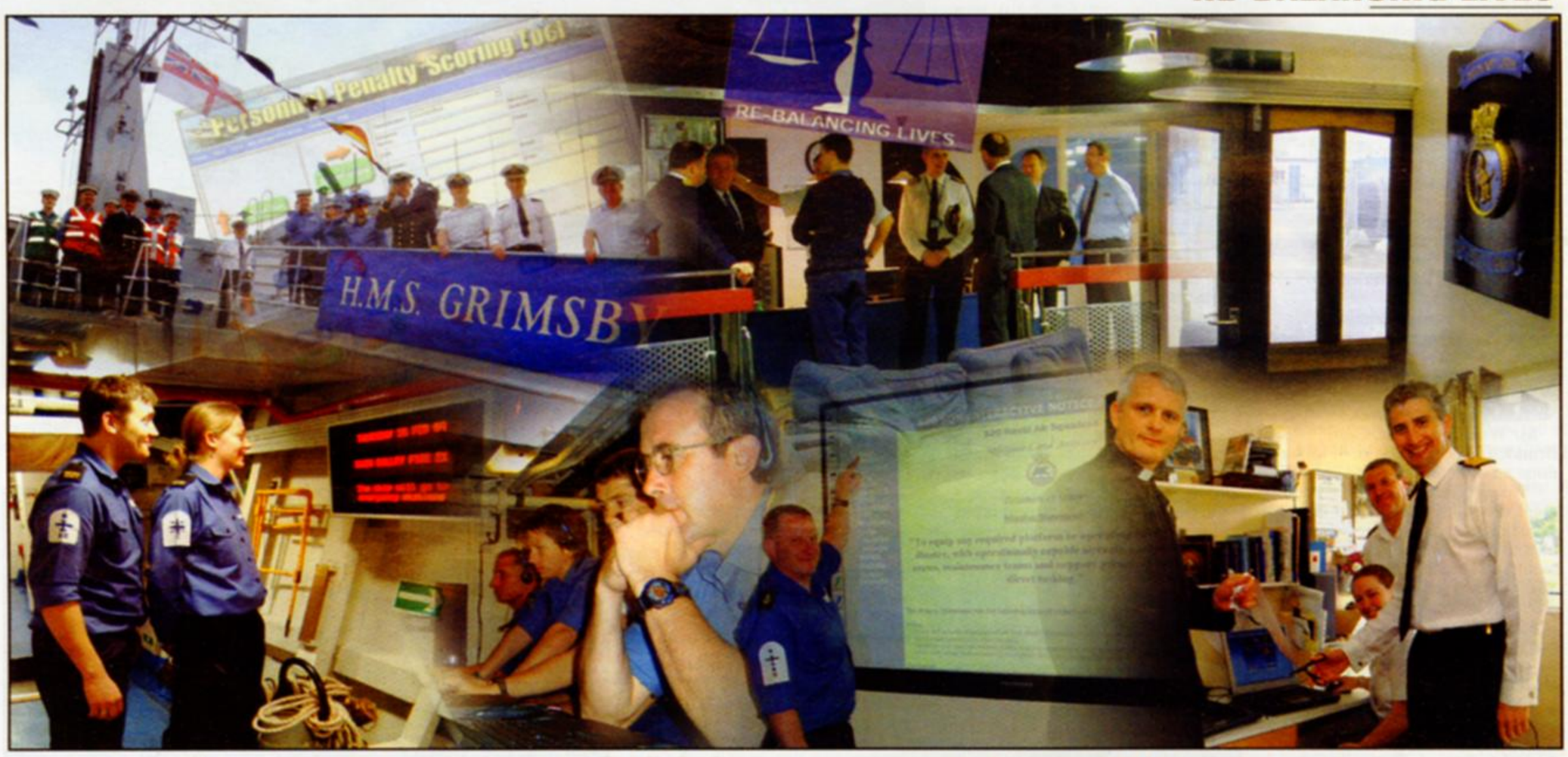
HUNT-class minehunter HMS Cottesmore hosted attachés from 20 nations including Uruguay, Brazil, Pakistan, Estonia, Germany and Canada during a spell alongside in Faslane.

The ship was also visited by Rear Admiral David Snelson, Chief-of-Staff Warfare, who rewarded buffer LS(MW) Sid Weatherill with a bottle of malt whisky for making the most effective contribution to the running of the ship in the past 12 months.



What has REBAL ever done for us?

RE-BALANCING LIVES



AFTER more than a year in operation Fleet's Rebalancing Lives (REBAL) initiative has made a difference – sometimes in Navywide matters, sometimes on a more modest scale.

But the chances are every sailor, senior rate and officer in the Royal Navy has felt the benefits in one way or another.

Whether in the field of IT (new computers or broadband connectivity), sport (fitness equipment), training (adventurous training support, additional learning centres) or accommodation (mess improvements), the REBAL programme has been wide-ranging.

And these improvements have been to the advantage of all ranks and rates – and if an individual doesn't think he or she has felt the benefit in their present job, the chances are they will in their next.

Of course changes are not confined to the 'coal face'.

"The really important, long-lasting stuff is behind the scenes," said Capt Simon Ancona, who is soon to move on from his job as Captain Rebalancing Lives to take command of a warship.

"The big differences come when the decisions taken at the senior level are made with people fully in mind.

"This is not to say difficult choices won't arise and hard judgements made, but there is a greater understanding of the implications to people and therefore the scope to avoid them or compensate."

Not only are tools for helping take account of people when making decisions in place or being developed at Fleet HQ, but Capt Ancona also points to a better way of doing business with those whose job it is to provide services and support to the Fleet and its people.

Capt Ancona now has a final task of ensuring that the REBAL flame is not allowed to gutter and die – the message is that REBAL lives on, but as a part of the fabric of the Navy rather than a stand-alone initiative.

REBAL work will remain a specific point of focus within the HQ with Cdr Malcolm Cree taking over the reins.

Having come straight from sea as Commanding Officer of HMS Gloucester, he is well placed to keep an eye on those issues which affect the front line.

As well as ongoing work (for instance, and amongst other things, there are trials going on into using ID cards as swipe cards and also new deck-scrubbing equipment) there are resources to match.

It is a clear statement on how important this work is seen in Fleet that, despite all the recent problems with money, Fleet has laid aside cash to sort out many of those small but irritating things that can make life so painful.

But it's not just the money.

"Most of what has been achieved has been accomplished through a change in the way we think and organise," says Capt Ancona.

"Better routines and a careful look at how we can reduce the 'REBAL Five' – disruption, uncertainty, drudgery and boredom, unnecessary pace and weight of work – have made a big difference. Even if many don't know it as REBAL business, the main thing is that life can be, and is being, made better"

REBAL issues, queries, suggestions and claims should be directed to FLEET PPX1, Whale Island, Portsmouth, PO2 8BY, tel 93832 5561.

(Here are some clues for you...)

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- Ship Alongside Project trial for FF/DD
- ❑ **Learning Centres in Yeovilton and Culdrose**
- Welfare facility in Culdrose
- ❑ **WiFi facility in Culdrose**
- Bike racks in Yeovilton
- ❑ **Touch screen kiosk in HMS Drake**
- Employment of a temporary clerk in the RM medal office
- ❑ **DHP Trial onboard HMS Manchester and HMS Richmond**
- RN ID Swipe card trial
- ❑ **Navystar Laptop issue to Fleet and RM units (1,000)**
- Conversion of engineering space to crewroom onboard RFA Fort George
- ❑ **IT equipment for 771 NAS**
- Uplift of AT equipment
- ❑ **GSB conference room in Clyde**
- Conversion to crewrooms, Staff Office and presentation suite at QHI (848 NAS)
- ❑ **Refurbishment of 'West Wind of Lynher' (disposed RM yacht) for Fleet use**
- Recreational equipment in Sail Loft gym, Portsmouth
- ❑ **Recreational facilities for 42 Commando (Bickleigh Barracks)**
- Laptops (Internet compatible) for RMR HQs
- ❑ **Introduction of the Personal Penalty Scoring tool**
- Encouraged contracting out Care and Protection for ships in refit
- ❑ **Separated Service in displaced Upkeep periods**
- Support for Television alongside
- ❑ **Support for Stabilised TV**
- Access to CSS outside the Ops Room
- ❑ **Rounds routine**
- Core Working Week
- ❑ **P'MIS re-write**
- C'SA agreement to include personnel matters
- ❑ **PSF – commonality and aligned**
- Trial of new, all-in-one 'Scrubber/driers' for onboard cleaning
- ❑ **Studies into Car Parking and Engineering support practises**

Drafty

Focus shifts to the long term

FIVE years ago we introduced a service at the Waterfront to provide a gateway into the Drafting process and to act as a source of advice on career management issues.

In the early days these Regional Drafting and Career Advisers (RDCAs) primarily dealt with providing drafting information to Junior Rates and coping with comments such as: "Are you the people that sort out my drafts?"

"What's this TopMast thing everyone's talking about?"

"I'm a MEM, am I allowed to talk to you?"

The stability provided through the squad system has shifted our customers' focus on to their longer-term career aspirations. The following comments are now common:

"My ship is being decommissioned, what is going to happen to me and my task book?"

"I really need to be in a different base-port. What can I do?"

"I've just achieved "Final Selection" status for Artificer candidature, will I be an artificer or an Eng Tech?"

For many personnel their first experience of the RDCA comes whilst conducting their joining routine.

A two-minute "health check" is conducted to confirm that the information held in the database (Naval Manpower Management Information System – NMMIS), and hence available to Drafty, accurately reflects their individual circumstances and aspirations.

A recent case whereby a Service couple with a dependent child was drafted to sea at the same time might have been avoided if their details held in NMMIS had been updated in order to reflect their changed (and demanding) domestic circumstances.

That said, there are still over 4,000 people who have no preference recorded whatsoever – clearly these are the people we first identify when looking for short notice drafts anywhere in the world (a number of vacancies still exist in Basra at the moment!).

DPFs and C240s remain the primary mechanisms for updating NMMIS – and it is your responsibility for ensuring they are up-to-date

When an individual has had a longer appointment with their RDCA, they should update their DO after the event in order to ensure all personnel involved in their career development and management are kept informed.

DOs should establish and maintain a close and productive relationship with their RDCAs as they can do much to assist (but will not replace) in the provision of drafting and career advice.

Anyone contemplating submitting their notice would be well advised to visit an RDCA first.

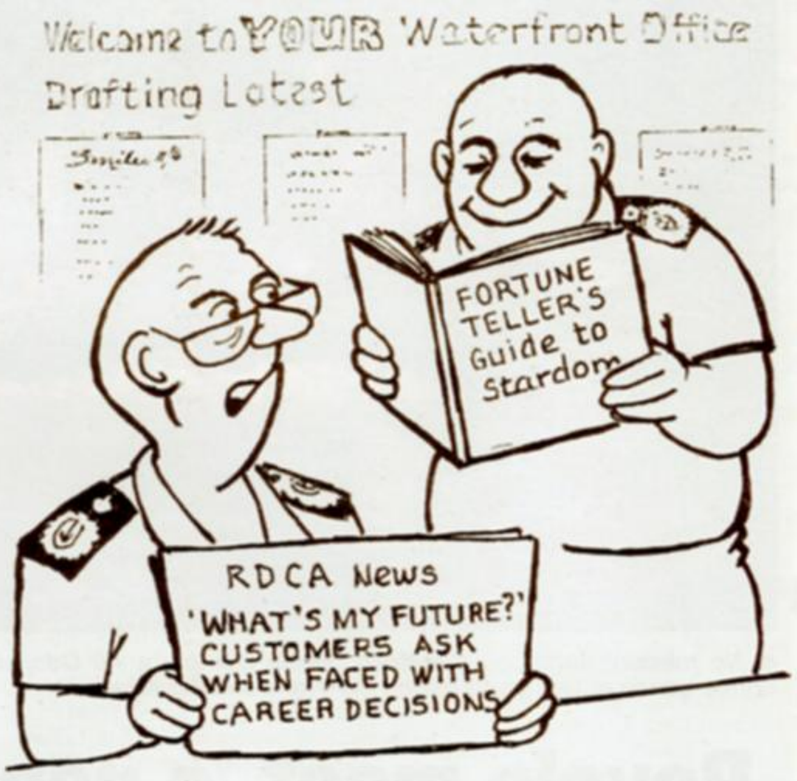
Whilst not always the case, experience has shown that notice is frequently submitted in haste without due consideration of all the consequences and implications.

As an independent arbiter, RDCAs can (and do) offer valuable advice when considering such a move.

Such independence has proven to be a valuable asset and frequently features in customer feedback.

What is less well-known is that the RDCAs network their knowledge and experience, thereby enhancing their level of service in order to assist individuals in making better informed career decisions.

For example, close liaison between respective RDCAs resulted in a submariner, unable to return to service in boats, undergoing an acquaint with the FAA at RNAS Culdrose which has subsequently resulted in him being accepted for branch transfer to AE, thereby retaining a valued individual within the Service.



'There was a time when the last thing they wanted was us reading them their horoscopes'

Senior Rates tend to have a differing requirement. It is obvious that many have already done their homework by consulting the RN Job List found on 2SL's website prior to making contact with their RDCA.

This more precise and accurate information (which is available to Junior Rates as well) means the visit can be utilised to better refine and hone their own individual drafting and career aspirations.

The information on the Jobs list is a good starting point in any individual's search for the right job.

The RDCAs cover all three base ports, the three main air stations (including RAF Wittering) and the Royal Marines.

In addition to their day jobs, they are also charged with an "outreach" programme that aims to: -

- Export the service to areas where there is little intimate contact with the drafting process e.g. SHAPE, Diego Garcia, Abbey Wood, etc. If you think a visit will help your people contact any RDCA.
- Maintain the profile within the local environment to ensure the service is fully utilised, e.g. RDCA availability to ratings at HMS Collingwood and visits to ships alongside.
- Inform the next generation of the benefits of interaction with the Career Management Organisation.

In the five years since the RDCAs have been in existence, they have provided a valued individually-tailored service within the career management process, effectively acting as Drafty's front-line troops.

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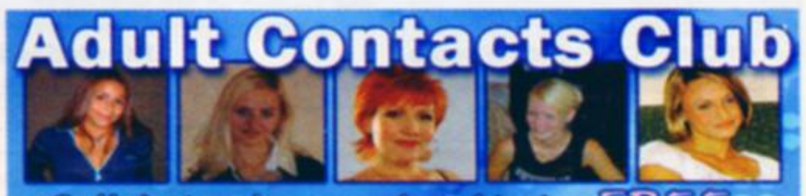
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The last bastion of naval medics

The sole survivor of the famous Royal Naval Hospitals which once supported the global operations of the fleet celebrated its 100th birthday this year. RICHARD HARGREAVES visited RNH Gibraltar.

Struggling uphill under the blistering Mediterranean midday sun, I buttonhole a local hoping I am heading in the right direction for the Royal Naval Hospital, Gibraltar.

"*Hopital militare?*" the lady asks inquisitively. "I think she closes."

Fortunately it hasn't. In an imposing brick building high on a hillside, not far from the southernmost tip of the Rock, the last RN hospital in the world continues to thrive, saving existing lives and bringing new ones into the world.

As the colony celebrated its tercentennial, so this colonial building which is redolent of the historic structures at HMS Drake marked its first centenary.

The 90 or so staff joined First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West and local dignitaries at a birthday ceremony celebrating 100 years of first-class medical support.

The hospital started life under the Royal Army Medical Corps. The RN took over the site – the previous 'old' Naval hospital served from 1741-1922 – in 1963.

Four decades later, hospital commanding officer Surg Cdr Robin McNeill Love concedes that 2004's centennial events may be the establishment's first and last.

The building looks impressive, but a lot of money is needed for its upkeep – £9.5m, the same amount being considered for investment in a new facility close to the colony's airport.

In an era when accountants will no doubt question spending £4.5m running the RNH each year to care for the dwindling band of military personnel on the Rock, the hospital may seem an anachronism to outsiders.

But as Surg Cdr Love points out, the importance of RNH Gibraltar is quality, not quantity.

"There's something about a Royal Naval Hospital – there's discipline, professionalism," he added.

"I have a great team and to be their boss and boss of this hospital is a real privilege. Among the Service community, the hospital is very highly thought of."

Two thousand military personnel and their families on the Rock are entitled to use the hospital's facilities, as well as visiting British and foreign military personnel, the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and MOD civilians.

All this means around 700 inpatients and up to 500 outpatients are cared for annually.

Thirty children enter the world here each year, 1,000 people pass through A&E and special medical assistance is always on hand for Gibraltar's Z-Berth, catering for visiting nuclear submarines.

In a hospital built a century ago, corridors and wards remind you of hospitals as they used to be, that world of *Carry On Nurse* – minus, of course, the comic characters and fearsome matron.

In fact, this is how hospitals ought to be. The level of medical care here surpasses most establishments; it's care almost on a personal level, not a conveyor belt. With an average of two casualty patients a day, treatment is pretty much instantaneous.

But if this paints a rosy picture of life in a sleepy cottage hospital, then it's wrong.





● *A gleaming example of Imperial tradition. Royal Naval Hospital Gibraltar as it appears today (top) and a postcard showing the imposing building, little changed, in its early life under the Army*

Everyone works one day in two and on those days on call, staff cannot leave the Rock nor touch alcohol.

"It is a 24-hour-a-day operation, you have to work every other day when on duty, but everyone is in the same boat," said matron Lt Cdr Carol Stinton.

"People are expected to do a bit of everything and there's a great quality of life out here."

Being 1,000 miles from Blighty, there is no extended family for many people to fall back on readily which means that staff must provide more than merely medical care – like the SSAFA midwives.

"It's not just a case of delivering babies, it's about looking after the family because not everyone has their whole family out here," Lt Cdr Stinton explained.

That neatly encapsulates life at RNH Gibraltar.

The hospital this year received a prestigious award for the quality of health services, recognising the level of care offered; it's an award many UK hospitals strive for.

And that 'Royal Naval' before 'Hospital' means a lot too. Especially as Gibraltar is the last one.

"We are a one-off. We are the last RN Hospital in the world. That means a lot to us. It is the only chance for the Naval Medical Service to serve in a Senior Service hospital, and that is an invaluable experience," said Surg Cdr Love.

"The Forces have particular requirements for high levels of health care. That's why we are important here."

Delayed and still costing too much

MAJOR military projects are still running over budget and behind schedule despite efforts to tackle the problems, a government watchdog has criticised.

The National Audit Office warns 20 of the most important additions to Britain's arsenal – including the future carrier, Type 45 destroyer and Joint Strike Fighter, the Harrier's successor – will cost the taxpayer £1.7bn more to provide than estimated 12 months ago.

The major projects, said NAO head Sir John Bourn, were also running on average three months late.

Sir John blamed decisions taken during the planning and design stage for the soaring price tags and delays in many cases. The 20 major projects will cost the taxpayer £50bn, not the £44bn initially predicted.

The Astute class submarine is expected to now cost 35 per cent more than originally expected and enter front-line service at the beginning of 2009, three and a half years late.

Progress on the boats in the past 12 months means that the £3.4bn price tag has only risen by £10m.



● *Not now expected in service until May 2009, the Type 45 destroyer is running two years behind original schedule*

The first of the Type 45 destroyers, HMS Daring, is also behind schedule; she is not expected to join the Fleet before May 2009, two years late. The cost of the F35 or Joint Strike Fighter has shot up £372m in the past year.

On the plus side, the 2087 sonar has been delivered to Type 23 frigates (HMS Westminster has been fitted with the equipment and Northumberland is undergoing the same overhaul) on time and £7m under budget.

Sir John said Whitehall had been wise to delay ordering HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, the next-generation carriers, until design issues had been solved, but overall he believed the MOD and industry could do better.

"There must be greater certainty as to when equipment will be ready for service and there must be greater control of costs," he added.

Lord Bach, Defence Procurement Minister, said there were many positives to be taken from the report – costs shot up by £3.1bn in 2002-2003, rather than £1.7bn in the past 12 months – and efforts were ongoing to ensure new kit reached the front-line on time and on budget.

"We are obviously still disappointed with the cost and time increases shown. I am determined that the changes made will make a significant impact. We are working with industry and the NAO to identify examples of best practice which will help us to continue to do better," he continued.

Capital appointment for Sutherland

DEVONPORT-based frigate HMS Sutherland will be the Senior Service's most high-profile attendee when she drops in on the London Boat Show next month.

The Type 23 warship will spend 10 days berthed in London's dockland for the Schroeder's 51st boat show, performing a duty last year carried out by her sister, HMS Northumberland.

The 2004 event drew 20,000 people to Northumberland alone; it was the first time a British warship had been an integral part of the show.

Such was the success, HMS Newcastle was dispatched to the Southampton show in September (another 15,000 visitors to the Geordie Gunboat) and 20,000 people are again expected aboard Sutherland.

Events lined up aboard Sutherland during the January 6-16 show at the Excel Centre include VIP visits, young sailor of the year awards, ship open to visitors and Trafalgar 200-related promotional work.

The Royal Marines plan to hold a dynamic display daily and the ship, which has just completed operational sea trials around the UK, and is hoping to take two children in need up the Thames for Sutherland's arrival.

■ *Navy News* readers can claim a £2 discount off the standard £14 ticket price (not valid on the press and preview day however). Phone 0870 060 0246 and quote 'Navy News'.

Communication's what we need

IMPROVED information about loved ones and Service life is what RN families want most according to the organisation set up to fight their corner.

The Naval Families Federation was formed 12 months ago to give a voice to the 'extended RN family' – wives, husbands, partners, children – to make their lot better.

A year into its life, NFF chairwoman Kim Richardson, herself married to a sailor for more than 20 years, believes her organisation is making important inroads.

"What have families told us over the last year? In a nutshell, they want more communication," she said.

"Relying on the serving person to pass on information is an antiquated and inefficient system. Our first task was to put communication at the top of the agenda."

Improved communication is one issue Mrs Richardson believes the NFF has already made a huge impact on, aided by the fact that the federation has the ear of both families and top brass.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent receives regular updates on the groundswell of opinion in the RN, the concerns of families and the efforts of the NFF to help people.

Talk is good, but there's nothing like first-hand experience, says Mrs Richardson, who joined helicopter carrier HMS Ocean for her three-day passage from Sunderland to Devonport during the summer.

"Several things struck me about life on board – how helpful everybody was, how hard the ship's company worked, the miles walked during the course of a normal day and not knowing what the weather is like," she explained.



● *Cheers to a first year: NFF chairwoman Kim Richardson and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent raise a toast*

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicola Harper, 2SL

"I should have done it years ago. It would definitely have been in my husband's best interest for me to realise that 'being at sea' is not Naval terminology for 'being on a cruise'."

To promote the NFF message, pamphlets have been provided to all 960 Citizens' Advice Bureaux, RNR/RMR units, more than 2,400 doctors' surgeries, and a website – *www.nff.org.uk* – set up which has had 140,000 visitors in its first year.

"I've met and spoken to families in Plymouth, Portsmouth and Bristol," said Mrs Richardson.

"The challenge has been laid down – invite me and I will come."

The federation can be contacted at Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth or on 023 9265 4374.

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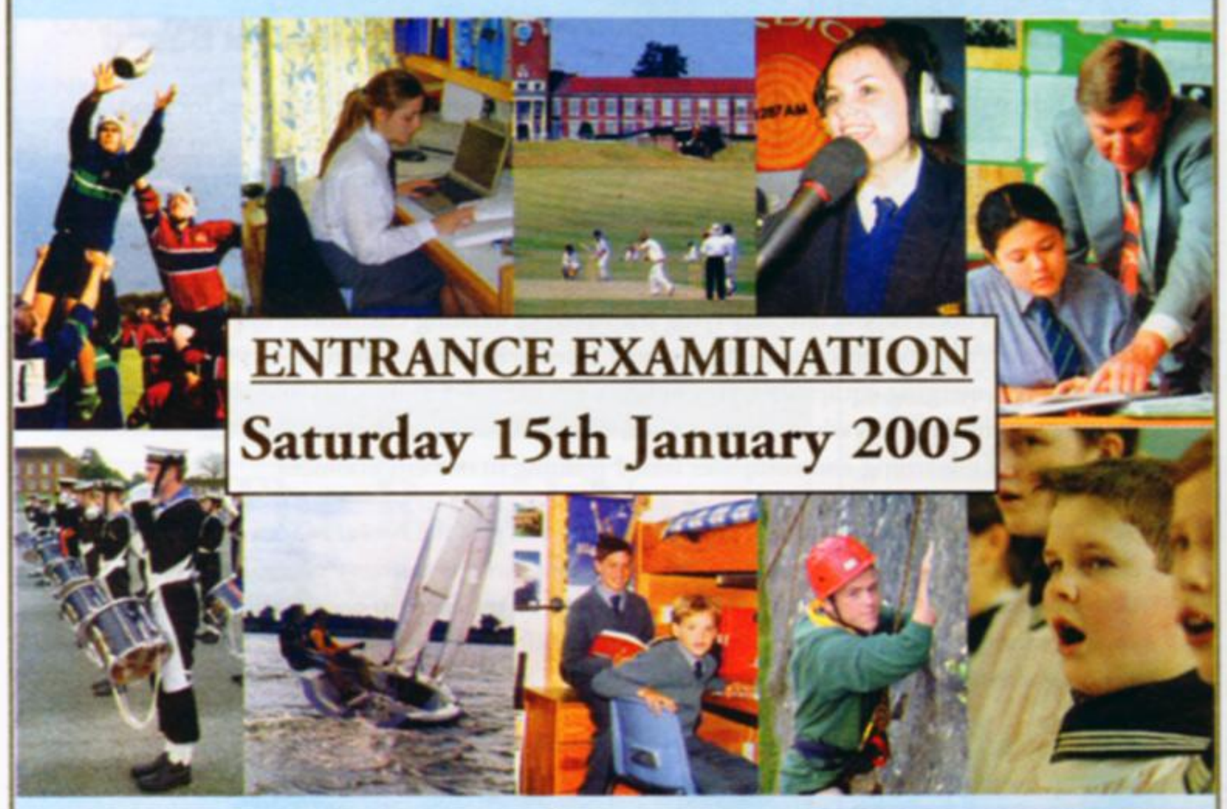
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Golden look back on Royal Hospital School

A GLORIOUS record of the Royal Hospital School in Holbrook has been commissioned by a proud parent, Thomas Restell.

A video or DVD is now available to anyone interested in a unique look inside the Suffolk school.

Thomas said: "The intention was to provide a record of Sunset and Commemoration Day Divisions; in the event it provided far more than that.

"The finished product has been on general sale for some weeks now and has been very well received.

"All profits go to the Royal Hospital School Association, for the benefit of former pupils."

For anyone who attended the school this film will bring back memories of their early days, and help out their fellows who may have fallen on hard times.

It will also offer a good insight to any parents considering sending their children to the Holbrook school.

The film is available on DVD at £17 or VHS at £15 (plus £1 p&p for UK or £2 for overseas) from: T.G. Restell, 148 Ninfield Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN39 5BD.

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Sea Cadets

'It is to your generation that we always turn when danger threatens'

You are following in Nelson's footsteps, the Commander UK Amphibious Forces told the Sea Cadets at their annual parade in Trafalgar Square.

Maj Gen Jim Dutton, Commandant General Royal Marines, told the 600 Cadets taking part in the parade to mark the 199th anniversary of Nelson's last battle that they were not much younger than most of the crews who fought in 1805 – and not much younger, either, than the majority of the Service people currently serving in Iraq.

"It is to your generation that we always turn when danger threatens," said Gen Dutton, addressing the parade from the foot of Nelson's Column.

"For half a century the Sea Cadets have made this day their own, but today you are not simply honouring the memory of a great naval hero, you are carrying the banner for the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines where it is needed most – in the hearts and minds of the community."

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Alan West added: "In this changed world since September 11 it is your personal code of teamwork, leadership and self discipline which will win the day."

Cadets from units throughout the country travelled to the heart of the capital to put on a show that included club and cutlass swinging displays, marching bands and Naval ceremonial followed by a service of remembrance. Rear Admiral James Rapp laid a wreath at Nelson's tomb in St Paul's Cathedral and another was laid by a representative from the town of Nelson, New Zealand.

At a reception following the parade, Gen Dutton presented the Sea Cadet Gallantry Medal to 17-year-old PO Tom Thorpe of Eastbourne unit for his exceptional bravery in attempting to save the life of a man engulfed in flames after dousing himself with petrol. It was only the second time in the past 16 years that the medal had been awarded.







Pictures by Sandra Rowse

Clockwise from above:

- ***Some 600 cadets from all over the country march past a distinguished array of guests at Trafalgar Square. Since 1910 over half a million young people have served in the Sea Cadet Corps***
- ***Maj Gen Jim Dutton, Commandant General Royal Marines, presents the Sea Cadet Gallantry Medal to human torch hero PO Tom Thorpe***
- ***Cadets bear wreaths from all over the UK to 'The Immortal Memory'***
- ***Reigate Unit TS Ark Royal provide musical support***
- ***Cadet Alexander Dean-Roberts of Chislehurst & Sidcup unit and Vice Admiral Sir Jonathon Tod exchange views***







Royal stitch-up

WORKING from photographs supplied by *Navy News*, Eric Ashby produced this remarkable cross-stitch portrait of the Duke of York in five weeks.

The vice president of Whitstable Royal Naval Association presented his masterwork to the Admiral of the Sea Cadets as he arrived by helicopter to mark the 150th anniversary of the local unit – the oldest in the country.

Eric, who was himself formerly a sub lieutenant in the unit, had spent up to eight hours a day working on the picture.

The award winning marching band of Whitstable's TS Vigilant and Herne Bay's TS Triumph led the Trafalgar Day parade through Canterbury, hosted by the city's TS Courageous, joining colleagues from eight other towns to make up a contingent 230 strong.

Lord Lieutenant of Kent Allan Willett told them: "You are acquiring self-discipline, teamwork, leadership, a sense of duty, pride in belonging to your units and, perhaps above all, good citizenship. Your Cadet service will give you a head start in life."

Wootton 25 years on



WOOTTON Basset unit's first 25 years were celebrated in style with a parade attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire.

The Mayor of Wootton, Cllr Susan Cooksley and North Wiltshire MP James Gray joined Lt Gen Sir Maurice Johnston and Lady Johnston at the saluting base as the cadets marched past.

Also in the 200-strong parade were detachments from the Royal British Legion, the RNA, the WRNS and No 2491 Squadron Air Training Corps.

Among the standards was that of the Normandy Veterans. Several former unit commanding officers and chairmen were among the guests.

The Colour was paraded through Wootton Bassett to St Bartholomew's Church where a non-denominational service of celebration was held.

Junior Cadet Emma Brown mustered for the parade despite having broken her foot – properly turned out in her uniform complete with plaster cast and crutches.

The finale was a flypast of a Royal Navy Jetstream from 750 NAS at RN air station Culdrose.



Lionel's long hours

VOTED BBC Yorkshire Community Service Person of the Year, CPO Lionel Crossley is seen here with his trophy. Lionel (77) has been a supporter of the Sea Cadets for over 30 years.

He attends York unit, of which he is Boats Officer, Seamanship Examiner and Pulling Instructor, almost every day and is present at every twice weekly parade night unless on a rare holiday – so it is reckoned he must have put in around 30,000 hours!

Southwark supports Service for Seafarers

THE ANNUAL National Service for Seafarers was first held in 1905 (100 years after the Battle of Trafalgar) and, apart from a few gaps during the World Wars, has been held at St Paul's Cathedral ever since *writes Leading Junior Sea Cadet George Whitfield of Southwark unit.*

Among the many distinguished guests at this year's service was The Princess Royal, escorted by the Lord Mayor of London.

Cadets from TS Cossack and also from City of London unit were proud to take a full part.

I personally declined the invitation to attend with my school, London Nautical School, preferring instead to attend as a Sea Cadet in uniform.

Cadets of TS Cossack were also delighted to welcome the Master of the Worshipful Company of Tallow Chandlers on board for their annual presentation evening.

The Tallow Chandlers form one of 103 Livery Companies of the City of London and Southwark unit is generously supported by them.

Of particular interest to the guests was the potted history of HMS Cossack and her involvement in the Altmark incident, in which on the night of February 16, 1940 300 British merchant seamen captured from ships sunk by the Graf Spee were rescued from a supply ship in a fiord in Norway to the famous cry 'The Navy's here!'

After a hand-to-hand fight, the British sailors released the prisoners and brought them home in triumph.

IT RAINED ON THEIR PARADE

WHEN the Sandown-class minehunter HMS Inverness received the Freedom of her namesake town, the local Sea Cadets got a soaking along with everyone else as the heavens opened over the Highland capital.



City's nuclear response put to the test

PERSONNEL in Devonport were holding a major exercise to demonstrate how Plymouth would respond to a nuclear accident as *Navy News* went to press.

Exercise Short Sermon was designed to test how Naval Base personnel and the civilian authorities – including Devon and Cornwall Police and Plymouth City Council – deal with an accident aboard one of Devonport's nuclear submarines.

As part of the exercise, personnel were being evacuated to shelter stations on the base, although no-one outside the establishment was required to take shelter.

Members of the public were not directly affected by the exercise, although there was the simulated distribution of potassium iodate tables to some homes and premises within a 2km radius of the Naval base, as sailors posted notices through letter boxes.

In four decades of operating nuclear boats, there has never been an accident which involved the release of any radioactive materials into the environment.

Beyond MOD and RN responses to a possible nuclear accident involving HM submarines, the Health and Safety Executive requires regular exercises to test emergency plans.

No radioactive materials were used in the exercise.

Dispute over Agamemnon

A FRESH battle looms for Nelson's favourite ship, this time in the law courts.

Uruguayan millionaire Hector Bado is suing his government for £58m over artifacts recovered from the wreck of HMS Agamemnon.

The 64-gun ship, which Nelson commanded between 1793 and 1796, foundered in Maldonada Bay between Brazil and Uruguay in a storm in 1809.

Señor Bada has raised several items from Agamemnon, including Nelson's seal and one cannon, worth, he says, several million dollars.

The entrepreneur is suing his government over breach of contract, claiming he is entitled to half the wreckage and treasure he recovers from the warship in a deal he signed with the authorities.

Saints lauded in the land of the gods

THE land of the olympians, gods, democracy and the argonauts provided the stunning backdrop for a high-profile visit to Athens by HMS Southampton.

The Type 42 destroyer resumed front-line duties after a six-month overhaul in Portsmouth by escorting HMS Invincible for Exercise Destined Glory, a NATO-led 'invasion' of Sardinia.

With Destined Glory over, the destroyer – fittingly powered by Olympus engines – headed east to join Turkish forces on exercises and pay the first visit by an RN ship to Athens (or rather its port Piraeus) in five years.

The Hellenic Navy hosted the British sailors, organising free trips to the sights of antiquity for Southampton's crew, notably the Acropolis and, appropriately, the Temple of Poseidon – god of the sea.

The Acropolis towering over modern-day Athens proved to be the highlight of the stay.

"It's everyone's typical image of Greece," said MEM Emma Dempsey. "Absolutely amazing – I can't believe I've come here as part of my job. It'll look better when it's finished, though..."

It wasn't all fun in the sun for the sailors, however.

"When we were planning the visit it soon became clear that Southampton couldn't visit Greece without attempting an olympian feat," said marine engineer officer Lt Cdr Paul Carroll.

And so 15 members of the ship's company set out along the historic route from Marathon to Athens city centre, raising £1,100 on the way for the neo-natal unit.

The Greek authorities provided a police escort for the walkers, and closed one lane of the main motorway into the capital.

To lessen the effects of the Peloponnesian heat, the walkers set off at 5.30am and arrived in the Olympic stadium (the one used for the 1896 games rather than the recent Olympiad) seven hours and 15 minutes later. (Celebrations we're told lasted another nine hours and 17 minutes!)

"Finishing in the stadium made all the hard work worthwhile," said one of the walk's organisers, WO2(MEA) 'Smiley' Miles.

Sport was a major element of the Saint's stop-off in Greece.

A team from the destroyer flew the British flag in the Navarino Cup.

The sailing contest takes its title from the 1827 clash in the Navarino Bay, when an Anglo-French and Russian fleet defeated a combined Turkish and Egyptian armada. The battle proved to be a turning point in Greece's struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Each year a regatta commemorates the battle.

This year, as a gesture of friendship between the nations, Southampton's Lt Anya Shepherd raced in the Yngling class with the Hellenic Yacht Club's champion Ruslana Taran.

The fact that their boat won was hardly surprising; Ruslana had just picked up Olympic silver, to add to bronzes from Sydney and Atlanta.



● *Not so wild west: OM 'Jess' James on the minigun as Southampton guards HMS Invincible*



● *Cream of the acrop: (left to right) MEMs 'Gash' Pipe, 'Billy' Elliott, LMEAs Lauren Cobby, 'Tam' Fraser, MEM Emma Dempsey, LMEM 'Mak' Makaruk and LMEA 'Neil' Diamond pose by 'everyone's typical image of Greece', the Acropolis*

Club opens door to even more people

THE Victory Services Club in London is extending its membership to allow the immediate family of serving and ex-Service personnel to join from December 1.

The club, near Marble Arch, is a private centre for all ranks, offering food and accommodation in the heart of the capital.

Traditionally, membership has only been available to serving or former members of HM Forces.

Now parents and children (aged more than 18), wives, husbands and partners of serving and ex-serving personnel can join the club, allowing access to its facilities. The membership price is £20 for an individual or £35 for a couple.

Details are available on 0207 723 4474 or at *www.vsc.co.uk*

Life sentence for killer chef

CHEF Ian Peters has been jailed for life for the murder of his wife and three-year-old daughter.

Peters, who formerly served in HMS Iron Duke and at HMS Nelson, admitted travelling from Portsmouth to Merseyside to stab and strangle his wife Susan and suffocate their daughter Ellen in January 2004.

Peters should serve a minimum of 27 years behind bars for inflicting "a disaster too terrible to contemplate" said judge Mr Justice Leveson at Liverpool Crown Court.

The chef has not automatically been discharged from the Navy; his future is being carefully but swiftly considered in light of the court's ruling. Peters has not received any pay since being charged and remanded in custody in February.

Seawolf fired

HMS Portland successfully launched a Seawolf anti-air missile against a towed target during manoeuvres for the Type 23 frigate in the western exercise areas. The firing took place in high sea states and low cloud ahead of the ship undertaking Operational Sea Training out of her home port, Devonport.

Tankard missing

MOD Police in Devonport are asking for the return of a silver tankard which vanished following a Trafalgar Night dinner in HMS Drake's ward room.

The 4in tankard is inscribed '15466 Cdr Williams' and is valued at £88.

Sport

Badminton champs

FORT Blockhouse in Gosport will host this year's individual badminton championships on January 27 and 28. The event is open to men's singles/doubles, ladies' singles/doubles and mixed doubles. Veterans singles and doubles are restricted to players aged over 35 on February 1 2005, and U21s to those under 21 on the same date. Details from LPT Lee Herron on 9380 28667.

Umpire building

HMS Temeraire will host a course for budding cricket umpires and scorers, as well as those who want to brush up on their knowledge of the sport ahead of an oral examination.

Details from Capt Ray Holyer on 0121 627 8370 or Lt Cdr David Cooke on 023 9272 3741.

Match for charity

HMS Drake will host the first HM Specialisation charity football match on Thursday December 9 (kick-off 2pm) when the MWS HMTG take on the rest of the Navy. Beyond being a source of Service pride, the match will raise cash for west country radio Pirate FM and its hospitals appeal.

Matt squashes opposition

A NEW face on the RN squash scene swept aside opponents and lifted the Combined Services U25 squash title at HMS Temeraire's recently-refurbished S/Lt Matt Ellicot.

OM Ross Vallence (HMS Collingwood) and S/Lt Ellicot (BRNC) reached the semi-finals of the U25 event; Vallence lost out to his Army opponent, but Ellicott eased through against his RAF competition, then convincingly beat his fellow finalist from the Army 9-1, 9-2, 9-2.

OM Vallence took third spot, and OM Richard Rowley (Raleigh) was fifth, suggesting a positive future for squash in the Senior Service.

Finalists in the men's, veterans and ladies' competitions were all either RAF or Army, as the younger Services took all the top seeds.

■ The Senior Service's squash championships take place at HMS Temeraire on January 28-29.

Categories are: men's open, women's open, men's veterans (over 40s), men's vintage (over 50s), men's U25s, men's challenge (players who have not represented the RN at Inter-Service level in the last three years) and doubles. Free playing shirt for all competitors.

Details from Lt Cdr David Cooke on military 9380 23741; accommodation at HMS Nelson can be booked on 9380 20120. Entries close on January 21.



● *A cup of squash, sir? S/Lt Matt Ellicot (BRNC) receives the Combined Services U25s cup from Capt David Langbridge (left)*



● *Runway success: The Combined Services Rugby League squad prepare for their impending clash with Barla GB U23, one of the country's top sides, on the flight deck of HMS Ark Royal. The carrier is in a state of extended readiness in Portsmouth Naval Base.*

Hasta La Manga, ladies

THE sunny Mediterranean climes of La Manga, Spain, will be the venue for next year's warm-weather training camp for the RN ladies' tennis squad.

Places for the March 19-26 camp are still left for players of all standards. Details from Lt Cdr Charlotte Bull on 93832 5573.



Coffey's ground for celebrations

JUNIOR officer Ralph Coffey returned from Canada with a gold medal to his name in a victorious team performance by British Forces fencers.

One hundred and 65 teams were invited to the event hosted by Canada's Royal Military College.

The two-day event is one of the largest team events in the world for the fencing community.

S/Lt Coffey (HMS Sultan) won gold as part of a winning team performance in the epée by the CS team.

There was a heavy RN presence in the Forces squad, including Lt Cdr Adrian Olliver (FOST SM), Lt Keith Bowers (HMS Cornwall), Lts Amanda Hale (Illustrious) and Sacha Brooks (Flying Fox).

Consistent performances by the Brits throughout the contest saw the tourists produce the goods across all three weapons.

Disappointingly, both the ladies sabre and epé and the men's foil narrowly missed podium spots – in each case ending in fourth place.

A bronze in the last discipline, the ladies' foil, led by captain Lt Hale, sealed overall victory for the CS team, which brought the trophy back to the UK for the first time in 18 years.

■ The RN fencing team overcame a spirited Sarnia Sword club side in a series of well-fought matches in Guernsey. The RN retained the title in this long-established contest for the third successive year.

"The quality of the Guernsey team meant that we could not underestimate the opposition," said Lt Cdr Matthew Clark. "Many of our fencers were competing in Canada for the Combined Services and were able to sharpen their swordsmanship skills against some extremely able opponents."

The strain in Spain...

A TEN-strong team of runners from the RN Athletics Club headed to Spain to take part in the Granada half marathon.

After training in the Sierra Nevada mountains, the team moved on to Granada itself for the race, which took place in hot and humid conditions alongside 1,200 athletes.

The 13-mile slog took the competitors around the main sights of the city, skirting around the heights of the Alhambra Palace.

PO(WTR) Paul Levick and PO(AEM) Allan Jones (both RNAS Yeovilton) were the Senior Service's early pacesetters, working hard to stay with the leading group.

PO(R) Pete Waumsley started steadily before working his way through the field – passing his colleagues in the process – becoming the second male military runner home (a Spaniard came first). Allan and Paul took 3rd and 4th military positions respectively.

Lt Do Drummond (HMS Raleigh) was the first female military runner past the post and there was an excellent performance from Mne Michael Wilsmore (42 Cdo) who was the fastest junior runner.

Overall, the trip was a great success with the opportunity to experience a half marathon 'Spanish style' and take in the sights and sounds of a wonderful Spanish city.

The annihilation game

RN boxers destroyed a very strong Western Counties side 8-1 in an awesome autumn which has seen the sailors and marines also despatch the cream of southern England's amateur fighters.





● *Sheer Khans: (Above) RN bantamweight champion 'Tiger' Khan (left) poses with Olympic silver medalist Amir Khan and (right) two Royals of 42 Cdo fight it out at the Corps' boxing challenge at CTCRM*

Picture: LA(Phot) Angie Pearce, CTCRM

In the Western Counties bout, new prospect MA 'Tiger' Khan (HMS Neptune) was too strong for A Chanter from the Western Counties. Khan's devastating right hand put him a clear points winner.

Navy bantamweight champion MEM 'La Roche' Boyle (Monmouth) gave away weight and experience but still ran out a winner after a tough non-stop action of 4x2's against the Western Counties bantam champion.

Welsh International and CSBA Champion Mne Alex 'The Hornet' Urrutian (42 Cdo) – ranked 10th in the UK – cut his tall opponent down with some devastating body punches then finished the bout with a final assault for a superb points win.

Mne Stu 'The Bull' Elwell (FP-GRM) took on Western Counties Champion B Woodward and after four gruelling rounds Elwell got the decision.

Mne Stevie 'TNT' Tighe (40 Cdo) moved from head to body with excellent combination punching. Tighe's speed and pace was all too much for C Welling to earn him a unanimous points decision.

MEM Daz Houre (Excellent) put in a fine performance by nearly stopping his opponent with a switch of attack tactics, also earning a unanimous decision.

LPT 'Mad Max' Maxwell (St Albans) made his return to the ring this year with a blast when he knocked out Western Counties middleweight champion G Stinchoube. A three-punch combination saw his opponent hit the canvas. There was no reprieve.

England International, Mne Mick 'The Irish Hammer' O'Connell beat out a sound warning to all heavyweights as he took less than two rounds to stop Western Counties heavyweight champion J Smith.

OM 'Bazooka' Suku was unlucky to not get the decision against a very experienced Bulgarian champion who guested for the Western Counties side while he waits for his professional licence.

A closer contest, but still a comprehensive victory, was the nine-bout match against the Southern Counties at Portsmouth's Guildhall.

'Tiger' Khan (HMS Neptune) opened proceedings against Commonwealth bronze medalist A Raymond from the Southern Counties. The bout was a step up in class for Tiger, as Combined Service/Royal Navy Boxing Coach POPT 'Q' Shillingford wanted to see how he would compete at national level.

"Khanie did not get the decision but his performance was exceptional and he has come on leaps and bounds as he prepares for his national title bid next year," 'Q' added.

Two command (grass roots)boxers supported the RN team match; Chef Schubert (Nelson) fought very well, keeping his opponent at long range in the first round and dropping him in second with a right uppercut.

LOM Baz Neil (Collingwood) started his bout full of confidence, unfortunately Neil was caught cold with a right hand to the jaw and the referee counted him out on his feet.

Mne Luke 'The Whirlwind' Wilson (40 Cdo) boxed at a fast and hurtful pace to run out a unanimous points win.

AEM Vaughn Perkins (Heron) had a very close three rounds, Vaughn boxed very well and was very unlucky not to get the decision.

Mne Stu 'The Bull' Elwell (FP-GRM) performed very well to subdue his tall and heavier opponent. Elwell's hand speed and punch accuracy won him a unanimous decision from the judges.

'Mad Max' Maxwell had a very tough bout with both boxers landing very heavy blows. Max won a unanimous decision from the judges. 'Q' added: "I am very proud of Maxwell's performance, as Maxwell is having to fit his training in and around his job as an LPT on St Albans".

LAEM Dave McElwee (Sultan) boxed a very clever bout keeping his power-hitting opponent at bay with stiff jabs and hard rear hand crosses. Dave won on a unanimous decision from the judges.

'TNT' Tighe (40 Cdo) exploded into action with non-stop two-fisted attacks wearing his opponent down. In the third round Steve sustained assault was all too much for his Southern Counties representative who collapsed on the ropes after a pain seeking right cross to the body. The referee stopped the bout soon after this incident.

On a more local level, a bloodied MEM 'Daz' Herron was cheered on by his older brother, LPT 'Lee' Herron when he took the special welterweight winner's trophy at HMS Nelson's novice championships. The marine engineer hopes to be joining his brother as a physical training instructor if he passes the PT course.

More than 30 entrants fought it out in Portsmouth for the championships, which saw Temeraire named the top boxing side (ahead of Neptune, Newcastle, Collingwood, Sultan, Grafton and finally HMS Invincible).

OM Neylon of HMS Collingwood picked up the best boxer trophy, while Temeraire's CH Stephens was named best runner-up.

The Nelson gym has just been named as the venue for the Inter-Service Boxing Championships, which will be held on February 9 and 10 next year.

Junior soccer skills

THE half-term autumn break was put to good use by children of personnel at HMS Collingwood in Fareham.

The RNFA laid on a day of football coaching under the guidance of the Service's football development officer Steve Johnson.

Twenty-seven youngsters aged seven to 13 were put through their paces as techniques and skills were taught.

There was no escape from the beautiful game even during lunch – an England video was screened as the children ate (mercifully not the Euro2004 horror show, but the 10 best goals and best saves by the national team).

The children left Collingwood with certificates and T-shirts, presented by chairman of Royal Navy Youth Football, Cdr Martin Doolan.

For the honour of the nation

THREE RN boxers have been invited to fight for a place in the next Commonwealth and Olympic Games (Melbourne 2006 and Beijing 2008 respectively) by England's Amateur Boxing Association: OM Shaun Macdonald, HMS Invincible (Light Heavyweight), Mick O'Connell, 42 Cdo (Heavyweight) and Neil Suku, HMS York, (Super Heavyweight)

Meanwhile, 'La Roche' Boyle is ranked 10th in England after taking on, but losing to, the country's no.5, Mark Brahnbart, in an exceptionally close match in London; one judge scored the fight at 24-24.

After these fine autumn performances, 'Q' wants his fighters to keep their heads and keep up the training regime.

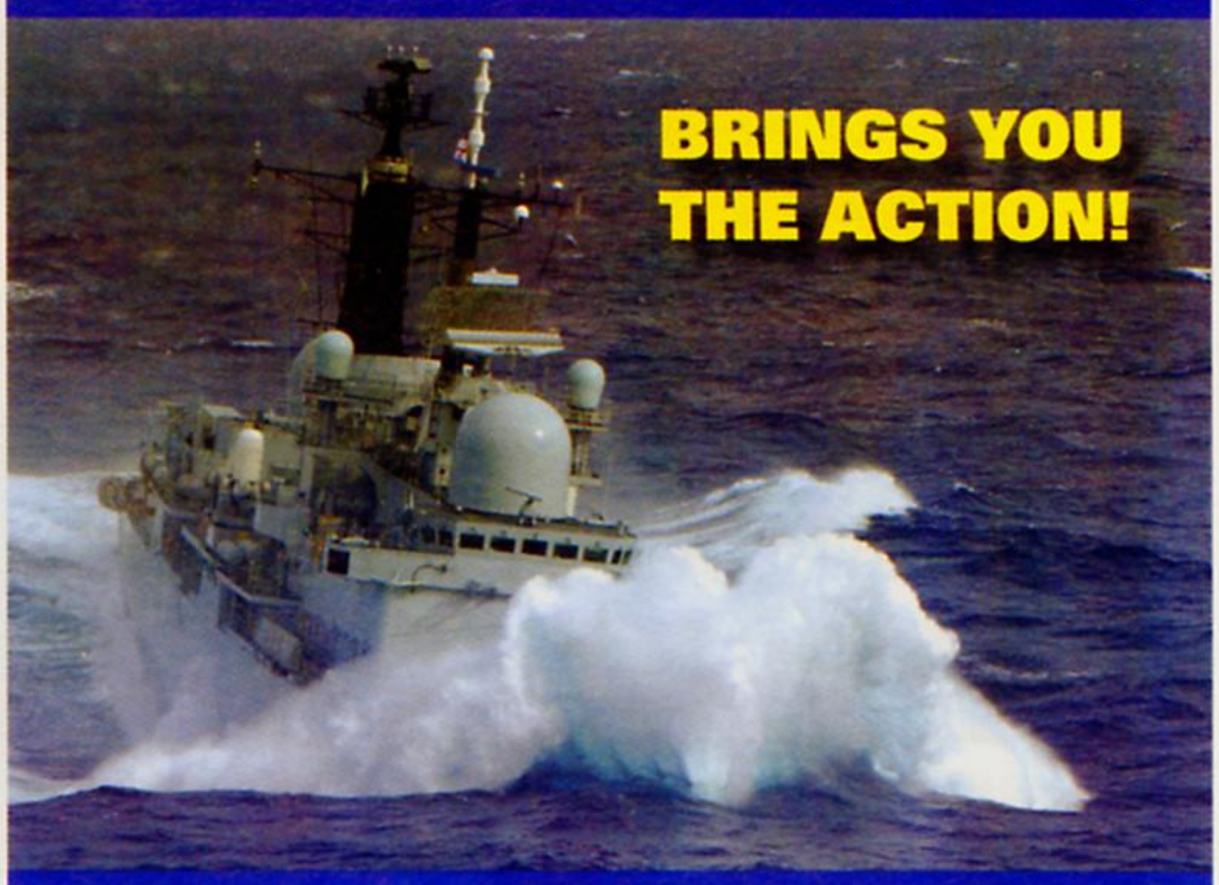
"The lads are training very well however, they must not come complacent," he added.

"I take them to England squad camps for sparring. The Navy team is sparring against boxers who are the best in the country.

"Urrutian found himself climbing in the ring with Olympic silver medalist Amir Khan. The experience for the Navy boxers is great and also lifts the profile of service boxing to the England team."

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Suits you sir (and madam)

THE first of the new survival suits for sailors are being delivered to the surface fleet.

The 'once only' immersion suit, to give it the correct title, should be worn, as the name suggests, once only – when crew have to abandon ship.

The emergency suits replace existing clothing and are easier to put on than their predecessors, as well as being more watertight, with a full-face seal.

Around 12,000 of the suits have been purchased by the RN, all the same size and colour.

■ Whitehall has also placed a £40m contract for new respirators protecting Service personnel from chemical and biological warfare agents.

North-west firm Scott Health and Safety will produce the masks which will reach the front line in 2007.

Defence procurement minister Lord Bach said the new kit was "no mere gas mask". He added: "It will give our troops an unparalleled level of protection from all manner of threats – biological and chemical weapons, industrial chemicals and other hazardous materials.

By Royal appointment

THE Princess Royal performed the honours at the RN's new nerve centre as her brother officially opened one of the Senior Service's more historic sites.

Princess Anne joined Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach – First Sea Lord during the 1982 Falklands conflict – and CINC Fleet Sir Jonathon Band as the Fleet Headquarters complex on Whale Island, named the Leach building, was fittingly dedicated on Trafalgar Day.

The new £20m HQ will save the RN around £10m each year by combining the functions of previous headquarters, notably the former nerve centre at Northwood.

Meanwhile, Prince Charles unveiled the restored Royal Dockyard Library at Chatham which houses 12,000 tomes, plus drawings, photographs and documents on the Royal Navy, Chatham dockyard and the Senior Service's influence on the Medway area.

"It's something of a revelation to see how people have preserved and brought life back to this area," said the Prince, who recalled his days of sailing into Chatham prior to its closure in 1984. "There's nothing quite like it anywhere else in the world."



● *A defining moment in RN history: The Princess Royal unveils a painting of Sir Henry Leach telling PM Margaret Thatcher that the Navy can re-take the Falklands, watched by Admiral Band and Sir Henry himself (far right)*

Picture: LA(Phot) Amanda Reynolds

Coming to a town near you

THE ROYAL Navy Presentation Team will be holding multimedia talks in December in/to:

Dec 1 – The Hon Company of Master Mariners; **Dec 8** – Rotary Club, Ascot; **Dec 9** – Hartley Wintney RBL; **Dec 15** – John Mackintosh Hall, Gibraltar.

The presentations resume after Christmas leave with a visit by the team to the London Boat Show on January 10 *(see page 36 for more details about the RN's attendance at the event)*.

Further details on the RNPT from Lt Cdr Peter Stanton-Brown on 0208 833 8029.

'A brief period of rejoicing'

THE 60th anniversary of Britain's victory in Europe and the Far East will be marked with a series of national events in the summer of 2005.

A 'veterans awareness week', highlighting the debt today's generation owes to the men and women of 1939-1945, will lead into the major commemoration of Britain's WW II effort, led by the Queen.

Veterans' minister Ivor Caplin said he expected towns and cities across the land to remember and honour the sacrifices made by the wartime generation by holding a series of events from Monday July 4.

The awareness week will culminate with a day of remembrance in London on Sunday July 10. Westminster Abbey will host a service of thanksgiving, attended by about 2,000 people.

In the early afternoon, the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh will host a lunch in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, again for about 2,000 people, chiefly veterans.

Also in the afternoon, a mixture of celebration and commemoration will be held in Horse Guards Parade, with wartime-esque music and entertainment as well as a two-minute silence. A tri-Service orchestra and a 200-strong Bach choir will provide the musical accompaniment, which will end with veterans' standards marching off.



● *The promotional poster produced by the MOD to highlight 2005's commemorations*

The procession of banners and standards will move down the Mall to Buckingham Palace, led by a marching band composed of musicians from the three Forces. The Queen will watch a fly-past of WW II aircraft from the palace's balcony, and the day will close with a Lancaster bomber dropping a carpet of poppies.

Entrance to the Westminster Abbey service, lunch and Horse Guards event is by invitation only; tickets are being allocated to members of military/home front veterans' organisations. All tickets will be 'doubles' allowing a carer or companion to also attend.

Among events planned for the awareness week is a 'living museum' in St James' Park, London, with exhibitions and re-enactments, plus a nightly show of images from the war.

A monument to women's role in the 1939-1945 conflict will be unveiled in Whitehall on July 9 by the Queen.

The July 10 date has been chosen to mark efforts in the western and eastern theatres; wreathlaying ceremonies and commemorations will also take place on VE Day, May 8, and August 21 (VJ Day is August 15, but the Burma Star Association has requested ceremonies occur on the twenty-first).

Mr Caplin said he was keen that the focus of attention was not merely in London.

"We have put together a range of events which will enable veterans and younger generations to remember World War II and the resolute spirit of those who coped so admirably with incredible hardship at home and overseas," he added.

"Major cities and towns are holding their own events around the UK. I hope that the programme we have put together will inspire people to organise their own commemorations at a local level."

Veterans and their families should contact 0800 169 2277 and members of the public 0870 607 4455 for further information about next year's events.



● *Their finest shower: A fairly blustery welcome in Portsmouth for DDG81, more commonly known as USS Winston S Churchill*

Picture: LA(Phot) Owen King

Winston's back

FETED as the world's most advanced warship when she was star of the International Festival of the Sea in 2001, USS Winston S Churchill paid a return visit to Portsmouth after taking part in a Joint Maritime Course.

Churchill is currently committed in support of the US Navy's Fleet Response Plan which is designed to quickly develop and sustain the readiness of ships and squadrons.

The aim is that the Navy can rapidly commit its worked-up assets in a national or international crisis.

Beyond bearing the name of the great wartime leader, the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, which displaces just shy of 10,000 tons, has a permanent RN presence on board in the form of the ship's navigator.

In a recriprocal agreement between the two Allied Navies, Type 23 frigate HMS Marlborough has a US officer attached to her.

Extra missiles on order book

AN extra £100m is being spent buying more of the military's new anti-tank weapon for the Royal Marines and Army.

The Javelin system is due to replace the existing Milan tankbuster as the green berets' principal anti-armour weapon next year.

The Anglo-American missile is light enough to be carried by a team of two Royals and can be set up in a matter of minutes.

The shoulder-launched Javelin uses sensitive electronic systems to guide the missile to its target once fired; it is already battle-proven, having been successfully used by American troops in Iraq in 2003.

The missile was ordered for 3 Commando Brigade and the Army's 16 Air Assault Brigade last year, but Whitehall has increased the purchase to include reconnaissance units and more Army formations. The extra Javelins will reach the front-line in 2007.



Turbulent times for Army

SEVEN submariners from HMS Turbulent joined their affiliated Army unit 25 Regiment Royal Engineers for a week-long test of infantry skills in Scotland's Galloway Forest.

The team from the Devonport-based hunter-killer took part in numerous challenges during Exercise Wandering Fin, including assaulting enemy positions, clearing routes through mock minefields, abseiling and night reconnaissance missions.

The deeps – *pictured above (back row: OM Miles, Lt Cloney, OM Lemont, CPO Stannard and LMEM Eyles and front row MEM Bell and LWEA Barlow)* **– crossed 30 miles of rugged terrain carrying full bergens, living in the open in usually adverse weather conditions.**

"It proved a unique insight into Army life. Despite the arduous conditions, team spirits remained high throughout," said Lt Justin Cloney.

"Even the Royal Engineers acknowledged that the intrepid submariners acquitted themselves pretty well for novice infantry."



● *A fine vintage: Cdr Jeremy Blunden bids farewell to HMS Newcastle in a classic Newcastle Breweries delivery truck*

Picture: LA(Phot) Paul Brookes

Newcastle out on a wave

GEORDIE Gunboat HMS Newcastle paid off in style on her final entry to her home through her 27-year service.

Trailing the traditional – and rather long – decommissioning pennant, the Type 42 warship entered Portsmouth on November 5 after a last spell at sea on navigational training.

It also marked the final day in charge for Cdr Jeremy Blunden, who was shepherded away from his ship in a vintage Newcastle Breweries delivery wagon; the ale producers have been long-standing supporters of the warship.

"It's sad to see Newcastle bow out, but she's served her nation well over the last 27 years. Many will look back on their time on board with a great deal of fondness," said Cdr Blunden.

Newcastle will decommission in mid-month and the last crew will depart her at the end of January.

■ **Glasgow gals bid farewell, page 26**

ROYAL NAVY RUGBY UNION

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YOUNG READERS CLUB



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HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

Young Readers Club is all about Naval aviation this month - admittedly not all that festive, but hopefully you'll find all these planes and helicopters whizzing about interesting anyway...

club zone



● Kieran Townsend at Yeovilton Air Day

As it's an air-themed month, let's start with the air-themed letters!

Kieran Townsend (mem 2894) wrote in to thank us for his tickets to Yeovilton Air Day. Kieran set off early in the morning for a packed day at the Naval airbase along with his mum and dad, his sister Demelza and cousin Luke:

"When we got into the show, me, Demelza, Luke and my dad went in the Royal Navy simulator - it was brilliant. We were in boats and they were going so fast in the water they went over the wake of other boats and bounced - my head hit the ceiling of the simulator.

"After that we looked in all the hangars, then we went to find a good spot to watch the display. The Red Arrows arrived and parked just where I was standing, I was so excited to be so close as they are my favourite.

"After lunch I queued up with Luke and Demelza to sit in a Sea Harrier. I am now going to be a pilot when I am old enough.

"Then we went back to see the finale. That was brilliant, it had all the helicopters, Marines having a war with the bad people, there was lots of smoke and noise, helicopters bringing more men, cars and guns.

"At the end the helicopters lined up and gave a bow, and the men inside waved to us.

"It was a great day, thank you very much."

Kieran, that does sound like a fantastic day! Megan Cox (mem 602) also wrote to tell us how much she enjoyed her day in Yeovilton, particularly the Royal Marines Band who were "excellent".

Ross Hook (mem 2704) sent us his grand drawing of an Apache helicopter and HMS Cornwall. He saw the helicopter on RFA Argus when he was on holiday in Falmouth this year.





● Mayfly splits apart on take-off

Bad start for gallant fliers

For Naval aviation, No 1 Rigid Naval Airship - known as Mayfly - was an inauspicious start.

In September 1911 the airship split in two even before it took to the air.

But just two months later the story was re-written when the first British seaplane, an Avro biplane, took off from the water.

Then another two months down the line, in January 1912, a Short S27 biplane carried out the first take-off from the deck of a British warship.

And so Royal Naval aviation truly took flight.

But the organisation for Naval flying still had to take form. May 1912 saw the start of the Royal Flying Corps, with separate Naval and Military Wings.

But the Navy wasn't terribly happy with this arrangement.

And so, in July 1914, the Navy gained ownership of their own Royal Naval Air Service.

In time as aircraft proved their worth during World War I, the decision was taken to form a separate flying service altogether - and the Royal Air Force came into being on April 1, 1918.

Between the two World Wars, aviation dwindled to a small part of the military, but despite this the Admiralty made a determined effort to get control of Naval flying once more.

And in May 1939 the Fleet Air Arm was taken back into the welcoming arms of the Royal Navy.

Who promptly renamed it the Air Branch of the Royal Navy for some reason.

But the name never really stuck, and some years later the title Fleet Air Arm was once again officially adopted.

Nowadays all three Armed Forces - Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force - work together in the skies, supporting each other in air power to keep British interests safe.



● Naval Harriers on the flight-deck of Invincible

I spy the Navy in the sky

In the modern Fleet Air Arm there are more than 6,000 people, all of whom are busy looking after some 200 combat aircraft, plus another 50 support aircraft.

Most Naval flying - but definitely not all - is based at two Naval Air Stations: HMS Heron at Yeovilton, Somerset and HMS Seahawk at Culdrose, Cornwall.

At the moment the Sea Harriers live at Yeovilton, but over the next couple of years the Harrier will replace the Sea Harrier, and the Naval fliers will move up to Stamford to form the Joint Force Harrier with the RAF.

The Royal Marines have quite specific needs for their aircraft: small and whizzy Gazelle helicopters for reconnaissance; the Mk7 Lynx helicopter to attack tanks; and the Mk4 Sea King, the assault helicopters - known as 'junglies' - big transporters to carry Marines into battle.

The Navy also uses Lynx and Sea King helicopters. The Lynx Mk3 and Mk8 are used in warfare for anti-submarine and anti-surface attacks, and the Navy's newest helicopter the Merlin also operates in this realm.

And the Sea King Mk7 - recognisable by the distinctive 'bag' that hangs off the side - carries out surveillance and puts together pictures of the battle scene.

Sea Kings are regularly used outside of the war scenario, Mk5s are called out practically everyday for their role of Search and Rescue. Many a sailor or mountain walker owe their lives to the Sea Kings of Culdrose or HMS Gannet in Ayrshire.

Finally the Navy has Jetstream aircraft, used for training and transport.

club zone

We've had another aviation letter from Daniel McDermott (mem 3323) all about the Sea King helicopters at Gannet.

"I would like to join the Navy and become a Sea King helicopter pilot.

"Where I live on a Scottish island the Sea King helicopters land to take medical emergencies to mainland hospitals.

"My mum and dad had to leave the island on one just before I was born.

"I would really love to visit HMS Gannet so that I could talk to the Sea King pilots and ask what it's like to be in the Navy, and be able to see inside one of the helicopters."

Well, Daniel, we've just spoken to HMS Gannet and they have passed on your letter to their Visits Officer, who will get in touch with you to try to arrange for you to join one of the school party visits over the next year. Doesn't that sound great? And a big thank you to Gannet for sorting that out.

Sherrie-ann Duncton (mem 3208) wrote in to tell us about being in the band of TS Illustrious. The band entered its first competition - and won! That's pretty impressive. Apparently her unit is part of the Nautical Training Corps and the unit gets up to all sorts of things like sailing, swimming, rifle-shooting, games and first aid courses.

Karyn MacKenzie (mem 1145) wrote in to tell us about her holiday in Australia, which had a distinctly nautical theme:

"It was fantastic!

"Our first week was spent in Melbourne where we visited Captain Cook's house which had been transported brick by brick from Middlesbrough to Melbourne. It was very small inside and my dad nearly banged his head.

"Our second week was spent in Adelaide, South Australia. We visited the Maritime Museum and also went to Victor Harbour for the day.

"On our last week we went to Sydney. We all loved the Sydney Opera House and the harbour bridge which we walked across.

"We also visited the National Maritime Museum and had a tour of HMS Onslow and HMAS Vampire. It was very interesting to find out the conditions that sailors lived in during the 1950s."

Ooh, and a big hello to Kierran Eldridge (mem 3262), and to Harry and Olivia Sims (mems 3039 and 3057), who wrote to tell us how happy they were to win our Roald Dahl competition.



● A Sopwith 1½ Strutter takes off from a platform laid across the top of the guns of a turret in the battle cruiser HMS New Zealand

Trials and tribulations of taking-off

When the Navy first started flying from warships, of course there weren't aircraft carriers with big flat flight-decks in those days.

So launching ramps were built on to the top of warships, as for the first launch from HMS Hibernia in May 1912.

Another option developed in 1918, where a platform was built over the guns of a ship.

The gun turret could be turned into the wind, and the warship was able to keep going while the aircraft took off along the lines of the guns.

These improvised platforms did the job - most of the time - but they weren't ideal.

The Navy began to operate aircraft carriers, ships specifically designed with large flat decks so that aircraft could take off and land.

These sometimes involved catapults and arrester hooks and wires.

But the modern Navy flies Harriers from its flightdecks, using a jump for a short take-off and vertical landing, abbreviated to STOVL.

● The first Sea Harrier is delivered to the Navy in June 1979



Members birthdays

It's easy to forget birthdays in amongst the excitement of Christmas - but we wouldn't...

John Appleby
Marc Awty
Michael Barnes
Kirsty Barron
Oliver Batt
Jack Bibby
Samuel Boldon
Peter Buckley
David Callaby
Connor Campbell
Noel Carr
Joseph Casswell
Martin Clark
Matt Collis
Jack Crosley
Lewis Croucher
Charles DaCosta
Connor Davies
Christopher Derrick
Oliver Dixon
Henry Dufosee
Alice Duke
Nadine Edwards
Patrick Feist
Richard Feist
Thomas Fox-Manuel
Jade Fraser
Sarah-Louise Freeman
Edmund Frondigoun
Matthew Gale
Nicholas Garland
Ethan George
Clare Gladney
John Goodfellow
Michael Gray
Daniel Haines
James Haswell
Alexandra Hignett
Daniel Jillings
Vanessa Kennedy
Oliver King
Harry King
Freddy King
Sebastian Kirby
Kelsey Knox
Daniel Ledger
Evan Leslie
Gemma Luke
Lisa MacPherson
Lawrence Makin
Gary Mattingly
Maria McEvoy
Alison McKeith
Nichola Mitchell
Thomas Morton
George Ogden
Joseph Paddison
James Panther
William Perry
Joshua Peters
Peter Petzing
James Pollard
Max Powley
Nicholas Primmer
Alexander Provan
Ben Reynolds
Michaela Robson
Scott Rodgers
Leah Rogers
Lewis Rowe
Cameron Salisbury
Sarah-Ann Sanderman
Christopher Shuttleworth
Jordan Slade
Jordan Sloan
Elizabeth Spencer
Harry Staley
Samantha Tattam
Benjamin Thornley
Poppy Watson
Joshua Watson
Thomas White
Joshua Whittle
Jordan Wilson

bluereef AQUARIUM.PORTSMOUTH

MEMBERS ONLY COMPETITION

Design our new Birthday Card and win a fantastic 'Shark Keeper Experience'

How would you like to come face to face with some of the ocean's finest predators? Well, we have teamed up with Blue Reef Aquarium Portsmouth to offer one lucky reader the opportunity to join the Blue Reef team and become an honorary Shark Keeper for the day – joining in the shark's feed and talks, as well as taking a behind-the-scenes look at the aquarium's displays.

We would like you to design us a new club birthday card! Designs must be sent to the usual postal address on an A5-size piece of paper and must feature the Young Readers Club logo and The Cat.

The best designs will feature in the Young Readers Club pages. The winner will have their design made into the official Young Readers Club birthday card which will be sent to all members on their birthday for the next year and also win this once-in-a-lifetime chance to be a Shark Keeper for the day!



Last year's winning card by Danielle Gatenby, Mem No 664.



Closing date 31/01/05. Normal Competition Rules apply, we regret we are unable to return any drawings sent in for this competition.

For more information on Blue Reef Aquarium visit **www.bluereefaquarium.co.uk**

Prize is for up to four people, including one adult, with lunch and refreshments on the day. It must be pre-booked, and taken before 30/06/05.

YOUNG READERS CLUB

FREE PRIZE DRAW!

The deeds and personalities of famous pirates have received significant attention in recent years however, no detailed depiction of their vessels has ever been produced.

The Pirate Ship 1660-1730 from Osprey Publishing sets the record straight, exploring and illustrating the range of pirate vessels that terrorised the high seas during the 'golden age' of piracy.

To win a copy of this fantastic book just send an email or postcard marked 'Pirate Book' to the usual address along with your name, address, age and membership number.



Normal Competition rules apply.
Closing date 31 December 2004.
Image taken from New Vanguard 70: The Pirate Ship 1660-1730, written by Angus Konstam, © Osprey Publishing Ltd. **www.ospreypublishing.com**

The rise of the rotary

The first rotary wing aircraft - that means helicopter in military-speak - to enter service with the Navy was the Hoverfly.

This little helicopter first joined the Fleet Air Arm in September 1945, just after the closing moments of World War II.

In time, helicopters moved from having a simple transport, protection or communications role to becoming used for anti-submarine operations.

The helicopters proved particularly useful as they did not need any big flight-decks in order to take off.

It was in Suez in 1956 that helicopters first displayed their assault talents, carrying troops from ship to shore to launch an attack.

● A Hoverfly offers an unusual canteen service





● A Supermarine Attacker of 803 Squadron

Jets set to be the first

The Supermarine Attacker was the first jet-engined fighter to become part of an operational Fleet Air Arm squadron in August 1951 with 800 Squadron.

A descendant of the famous Spitfire aircraft, which had a piston engine, the Attacker had certain design problems which meant it wasn't a great success in service.

But it was a start. And jet-engined aircraft developed and improved over the years.

The Seahawk took over from the Attacker, and played an important part in the Suez Crisis of 1956.

Other famous names in Naval jet aircraft include the Phantom, the Seahawk, Sea Vixen, Venom and Vampire, and the Scimitar.

The Buccaneer is often described as one of the best aeroplanes ever bought for the Navy.

It was a strike aircraft, designed specifically to fly at a low level with a high speed.

The first operational squadron of Buccaneers, in this case 801 Squadron, formed in 1962.

The aircraft stayed in service with the Royal Navy until 1978.

Thanks to Jerry Shore and all at Fleet Air Arm Museum for all historic photographs

● A Buccaneer S2 of 809 Squadron on the flight-deck of HMS Ark Royal



club zone

Now, we've got a very important message to deliver to certain of our YRC members.

So Lewis, Callum and Mollie-Grace Rowe, here's a message from your dad, Lt Phil Rowe, who will be away at sea over Christmas in HMS Echo.

"Dear Lewis, Callum and Mollie-Grace,

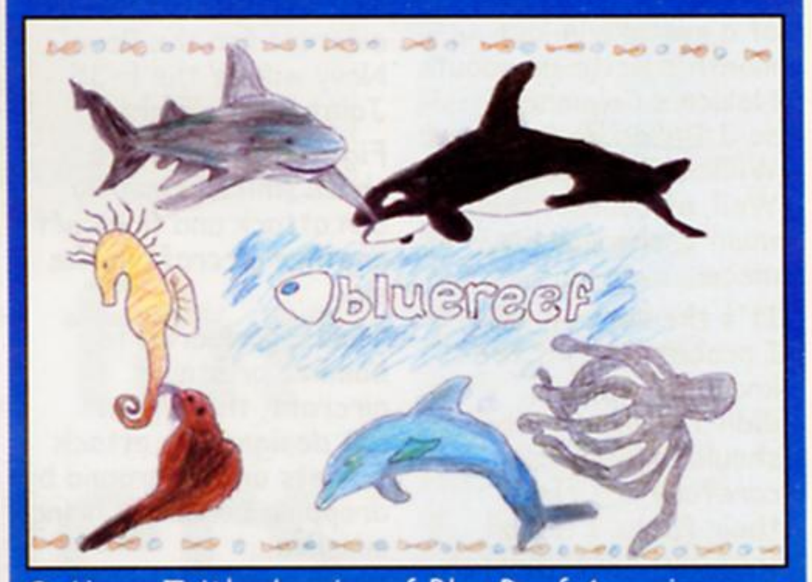
"Hope you all have a fantastic Christmas and that Santa brings you all you wish for.

"Christmas will not be the same this year, but I will be thinking of you all at this special time and counting the days until we can all be together again.

"Give mum a big Christmas kiss from me.

"Love you loads and miss you heaps, Dad."

It sounds like your dad really misses you, and we're sure all the mums and dads who are away over Christmas will have similar messages for all their children.



● Aimee Tait's drawing of Blue Reef Aquarium

Just take a look at this great drawing from Aimee Tait (mem 2919) after her visit to Blue Reef Aquarium.

We also had letters about Blue Reef from Lauren Cannon (mem 2923), Luke Brandt (mem 3285) and Kimberley Best.

Benjamin White (mem 3166) wrote to tell us how much he liked the Crunching Crocodiles game he won.

Benjamin's dad Julian says that he thinks his son got his interest in the Royal Navy from him. The family try to visit Portsmouth at least once a year, usually coming down to the Festival of Christmas at the Historic Dockyard.

"Although we like looking at all the ships our favourite has got to be HMS Warrior. Benjamin's great great grandad was in the Royal Navy, he joined as a boy in 1873 and did not retire until 1919. He trained as a Torpedo Gunner and finished as a lieutenant commander.

"Having traced his Service records at the National Archive at Kew, I found out that he was on the Warrior a few times. My interest in the Warrior has led me to joining the association.

"Anyway keep up the good work. Benjamin really enjoys looking into the children's section of the Navy News and being part of the Young Readers Club."

Thank you for the praise! We try our best.

WIN! The gift with a Twist



Looking for something different this Christmas? Look no further. Nikko, Britain's leader in radio-controlled toy cars has introduced a fast and furious 'Twist N Turn' stunt car that the whole family can enjoy! A speedy little number the Twist N Turn is the most innovative toy vehicle around, possessing a cutting-edge four-wheel steering system and high impact body design to roll it right back on its wheels, no matter how sharp the corner.

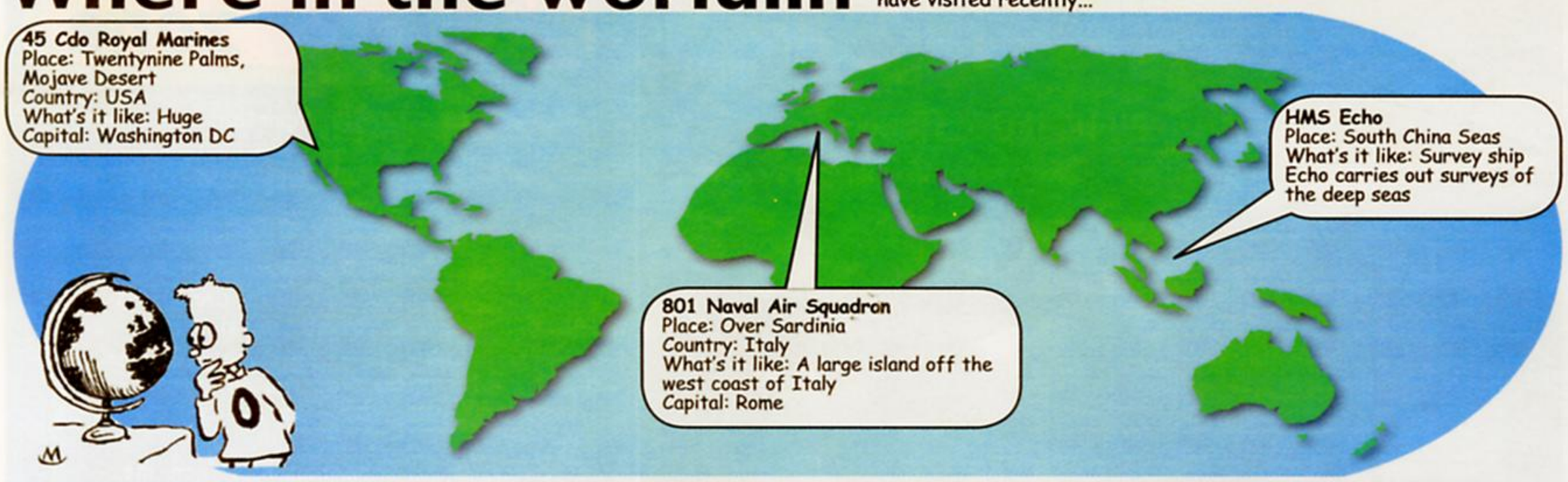
What's more, its super-chunky, shock-absorbent rubber tyres mean the car is race-worthy indoors and out whilst guaranteeing no nasty scratches on the skirting board: keeping mum and dad happy too!

For your chance to win one of these fantastic Twist N Turn cars just send us a postcard or email marked 'Twist N Turn' to the usual address along with your name, address, age and membership number.

Normal competition rules apply. **Closing date 31/12/04. RRP £39.99**
For more information contact **Nikko Service Centre** on **01707 3777767**
or visit **www.nikko-toys.co.uk**

Where in the world...?

The ships and people of the Royal Navy have been travelling all around the world for the past few months. Here are a few of the places they have visited recently...



Writer trips on Nelson's column

It's time for an apology. I made a bit of a mistake in last month's write-up about Nelson's Column – I said Queen Victoria was William IV's daughter. Well, of course, she wasn't, she was his niece.

It's the sort of thing I probably ought to know, but sadly I didn't. A good writer should always research carefully and check their facts. I did all that, but unfortunately I am a writer with truly lousy handwriting.

So somewhere between writing and reading my notes, 'successor' became 'daughter'. They might not look all that similar to you, but just goes to show how bad my handwriting is.

Now when it comes to making mistakes, you can ignore them, but that doesn't solve anything, or you can learn from them and move on. And it's always better to learn.

So sincere apologies to anyone I mislead by my ignorance, and I really am going to have to practise my handwriting...

Flight to the future



● An experimental version of the short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft which will be used by the Royal Navy - photo supplied by BAE Systems

The next generation of aircraft for the Royal Navy will be the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

Fighter aircraft are those which primarily can attack and fight off another aircraft in the sky.

This is compared to bomber or strike aircraft, those that are designed to attack targets on the ground by dropping bombs or firing missiles.

The Lockheed Martin Joint Strike Fighter combines both these abilities, and will replace both the fighter Sea Harrier and the strike Harrier.

These new aircraft will be used by the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, but the significant majority of the 2,593 aircraft planned to be built will be flown by the US Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.

The Royal Navy and RAF will fly what's called a STOVL Joint Strike Fighter. That means Short Takeoff Vertical Landing.

That's what the Sea Harrier and Harrier do now, they take off from the jump (or ski-ramp) at the front of aircraft carriers like HMS Invincible, then the Harriers land by hovering alongside the carriers then carefully moving sideways and down until they touch down gently on to the flight-deck.

There is still a long time to wait until the British Navy will start flying the Joint Strike Fighter.

However builders Lockheed Martin have already put together two early Joint Strike Fighters, designed to demonstrate the different concepts of how the aircraft would work.

The arrival of the all-conquering Lockheed Martin F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is definitely the next big thing for Naval aviation.

We look forward to seeing it in the skies!

WIN A SUPER V.SMILE

Vtech has introduced a revolutionary new concept in TV-based learning – V.Smile! This unique plug'n'play game system, predicted as one of the hottest toys in the top ten for Christmas 2004, introduces pre-schoolers to the magic of learning through fun and engaging character-led software.

For your chance to win this fantastic V.Smile send us a postcard or email clearly marked 'Smile' along with your name, address, age and membership number to the usual address.



ERP: £49.99, Suitable for children aged 3-7 years for further information check out www.vtechuk.com
Normal competition rules apply.
Closing date 31/12/04.

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Young Readers Club, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH
For further details or group discounts contact us on youngreaders@navynews.co.uk or 023 9273 5558

This month

On the night of December 7-8, Operation Franckton began, where the 'Cockleshell Heroes' set out to attack enemy ships harboured up the Gironde at Bordeaux.

The ships were anchored 70 miles from the sea which meant that the Royal Marine canoeists were ideally suited to sneak quietly up the river and deliver the killer blow.

Six small canoes, each containing just two elite RM commandos, were originally intended to set out from the submarine HMS Tuna to paddle towards their enemy goal.

But one canoe was ripped before it even left the submarine, and three canoes were lost on their way up the river.

The remaining two canoes made land, and the heroic Commandos made their way through the enemy-held countryside towards the ships that lay oblivious to their encroaching danger.

The men reached the ships themselves on the fourth day after setting out, and carefully placed limpet mines to make the most damage.

As a result of their bravery, four of the German's ships were seriously damaged and out of action for months.

The four men in their two canoes set off again to make their way home to the safety of England.

But only two returned - Major 'Blondie' Hasler and Mne Bill Sparks.

This daring raid had seen all the others who had set out on that cold December night drowned en route or killed by their German captors.

But their story lives on in the pride of the Royal Marines.

Next month

You might perhaps have noticed that there's a bit of a buzz in Naval circles about 2005.

Why's that?

Well, it's 200 years since Nelson's greatest victory at the Battle of Trafalgar.

So we're starting the year on Trafalgar.

Competition rules:

All Young Readers Club competitions are open to readers aged 16 or under, except employees of Navy News and their families or any company associated with the competition.
One entry per person.
The decision of the judge is final.
Full competition rules are available by contacting us at the usual address.